

October 11, 2026

“A Faithless Generation”
Lesson 2

Judges 2:6-15

Intro

The focus of today’s study comes from the introduction phase of Judges, which is a historical review of what has happened to God’s people, and God’s relationship with them. It presents a framework for understanding the narratives that are presented in the book. Judges shows a repetitive cycle of sin that looks like this: 1) a generation passes away; 2) the next generation ignores God’s expectations; 3) the people follow false gods; 4) God is provoked to anger; 5) the Israelites experience oppression under foreign rule; 6) they cry out to God in their distress; 7) the Lord raises up a deliverer for the people; 8) peace is restored to the land. This pattern has been described using the alliteration *sin, suffering, supplication, salvation*.

Read Judges 2:6-15

1. vs. 6: At the end of Joshua, the people have recommitted themselves to follow God’s covenant
Here, each tribe goes to the part of the land given to them when it was divided up
Up to this point, the people have moved together as a group, a whole
They have shown unity under the leadership of Moses and Joshua
Now they are splitting up to take possession of their tribal land inheritance
2. vs. 7: Joshua lived to about 1400, with the tribal elders living another 20 years or so beyond that
The people serve God during this time, identifying themselves as “God’s people”
The elders administer justice and settle disputes
They probably are the end of the 2nd generation after bondage in Egypt
These are the ones who crossed the Jordan to take possession of the Promised Land
3. vs. 8: Joshua’s death is reported in this verse, and that he was 110 years old
He is described as “the servant of the Lord”
This is the same description given of Moses more than a dozen times
Being described in this way is a good goal for every believer
4. vs. 9: Joshua is buried in his tribal land, as a member of the tribe of Ephraim
Ephraim is the 2nd smallest of the 12 tribes
5. vs. 10: A generational shift occurs here, and phase one of the “Judges cycle” begins
“Another generation”—a third generation—follows the 2nd which have all died
This new generation hasn’t experienced God’s miraculous works like the other generations
A breakdown seems to have occurred—the 2nd generation didn’t transfer what they knew
The word “knew” here doesn’t mean just knowing something
It also implies being undividedly loyal to God, to knowing Him personally

6. vs. 11: This third generation “did evil in the eyes of the Lord, and served the Baals”
The 1st Commandment in Ex. 20:3 is to have no other gods before Jehovah
This group repeats the same rebellion as their ancestors; they worship false gods
God is aware—he sees all they do (“in the eyes of the Lord”)
The Baals are collectively the gods of storms, weather, and fertility
Baal represents all Canaanite gods, including all the local variations
The Baals are worshipped to get blessing on their crops
This idolatry is connected to who the people give credit to for their provisions
7. vs. 12a: The Israelites “forsook the Lord”
To forsake means to abandon, and then to replace the abandoned with something else
The people have abandoned “the God of their ancestors, who brought them out of Egypt”
This shows the history of God’s care and deliverance; He has been faithful to Israel
Instead of following God, the people worship the gods of the local peoples
They have been negatively influenced to reject God
This is a theme throughout the entire Bible: assimilation vs. allegiance
8. vs. 12b-13: God is displeased by the people’s disobedience
The Hebrew word translated as “aroused” has broader meanings
It means to be vexed, to be sorrowful, to be troubled
The people’s choice to turn away from God grieves Him
Ashtoreths is the plural form of the Canaanite goddess Astarte
She is associated with war, sexuality, and healing
She is seen as Baal’s consort
Together they are believed to bring fertility to the land and to people
9. vs. 14: The Lord’s anger is caused by Israel’s failure to be exclusively loyal to Him
Israel’s violation of the covenant is serious
One consequence is that God gives His people over to oppression by their enemies
God warned them in Deuteronomy that this would happen as a curse for disobedience
Raiders now plunder their possessions, and they become subject to local rulers
They now live in oppression
10. vs. 15: “The hand of the Lord” suggests God’s power and might to carry out His will
His “hand” brought Israel out of Egypt
His hand was with Israel when they entered the Promised Land
Now His hand is turned against Israel to defeat them
The distress of the people is physical, the oppression they are experiencing

Application: The older (2nd) generation may have been responsible for not properly teaching the next generation about God’s care for His people. But the choice to follow God has to be personally accepted and enacted. Unfortunately, humans are inconsistent and have a tendency toward sin. We make bad choices and fail to obey God’s ways. Like the Israelites, we struggle to do what is right and often find ourselves in negative spirals. Wherever God’s people dwell, there is the temptation to absorb the negative aspects of the culture around us. These pressures can pull us away from God, clouding our vision and hurting our decision

making. We are in danger of failing when we don't keep God's word faithfully in our minds, and our relationship with Him as our highest priority. This leads to two possible (and necessary) actions: protect ourselves from the sinful influences of the ungodly, and consider what we can do to support the next generation in resisting as well.

Prayer: Father God, thank You for being our provider and protector and deliverer. Thank You for giving us examples of both what to do and what to avoid. Help us remember both who You are and the many things you have done for us. We ask for your power and strength to set aside temptations and false gods and negative cultural influences that will corrupt our relationship with You. In Jesus' name, Amen.