

The Agonies of Apostasy

Chapter 2

Audio Lesson: Old Testament Survey lesson 28



Objective: To understand the cycle of apostasy in the book of Judges and learn from it.



And the people said to Joshua, "We will serve the LORD our God and obey him."

—Joshua 24:24

In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did what was right in his own eyes.

—Judges 17:6

The book of Judges covers the 400 years after the conquest of the Promised Land, 400 years after the Israelites said, "We will serve the Lord our God and obey him." There was no king in this period of Hebrew history, and "every man did what was right in his own eyes" (Judges 17:6). The main problem in the book of Judges is the cycle of apostasy, or falling away, in which people who had pledged to obey God, began to abandon their faith. They would begin with commitment to God, and then fall away from that commitment. Then they would become corrupt and be defeated by their enemies. In their distress, they would cry out to God, who would send a judge to deliver them, and then they would recommit. Then the cycle would start all over again.

This cycle happens seven times in the book of Judges and teaches us that as individuals and as nations we can miss God's blessings when we forget our commitment to love and obey Him. Judges warns us of the dangers of neglecting God and the rewards of loving, worshiping, and serving Him.



1. **True** or false? The book of Joshua is about conquest, and the book of Judges is about failures after the conquest.

2. True or **false**? The Bible says that war is always wrong.

3. True or **false**? All Christians agree on issues of war and pacifism.
4. True or **false**? True followers of Christ never commit apostasy.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one answer for each question.

5. How many years of Hebrew history are covered in the book of Judges?
 - a. 50
 - b. 100
 - c. 400**
 - d. 800
6. Who did Joshua train to succeed him?
 - a. Caleb
 - b. Gideon
 - c. Deborah
 - d. No one**
7. What's the key statement in the book of Judges?
 - a. Everyone did right in his own eyes.**
 - b. Everyone obeyed God.
 - c. Israel conquered all its enemies.
 - d. Israel had to leave the Promised Land.
8. What is the primary spiritual problem in Judges?
 - a. Apostasy, or standing away from God**
 - b. Corrupt priests
 - c. Enemies deceiving the people
 - d. Arguments over how to sacrifice
9. Place the following steps in their proper order in the cycle of apostasy.

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|-------|----------|
| a. Standing away from God | 12:00 | <u>c</u> |
| b. An enemy threatens | 1:00 | <u>a</u> |
| c. Right with God | 2:00 | <u>e</u> |
| d. Judge raised up to lead | 3:00 | <u>i</u> |
| e. Moral corruption | 4:00 | <u>b</u> |
| f. Defeated by enemy | 5:00 | <u>f</u> |
| g. Spiritual revival | 6:00 | <u>i</u> |
| h. Cry out to God for mercy | 7:00 | <u>h</u> |
| i. Slaughter and slavery | 8:00 | <u>l</u> |
| j. Political corruption | 9:00 | <u>g</u> |
| k. Deliverance from enemy | 10:00 | <u>d</u> |
| l. Repentance | 11:00 | <u>k</u> |



10. How many times in the book of Judges did Israel go through this cycle of apostasy?
- Once
 - Twice
 - Five times
 - Seven times**
11. What is a key message of the book of Judges for us today?
- Once in we are saved and enjoying God’s blessings, we do not sin any more.
 - Sin is always possible. We must be careful.**
 - When we sin, God sends us out of the Promised Land.
 - We can never defeat all our enemies.
12. Who can go through the cycle of apostasy?
- Individuals
 - Churches
 - Nations
 - All of the above**
13. Which are consequences of apostasy?
- Slavery to the enemy
 - Moral corruption
 - Death
 - Suffering
 - All of the above**
14. Which of the following statements about repentance is true?
- We cannot really repent until we have experienced judgment.
 - Once we confess our sins, repentance is not necessary.
 - We do not have to experience judgment; we can repent first.**
 - When judgment comes, it is too late to repent. God will not restore us.



Where do you find yourself in the cycle of apostasy? Are you experiencing all of God’s blessings in your “Promised Land”? If not, what are your spiritual enemies? Are there any areas of your life in which you need to repent?



Thank God for His forgiveness and ask Him to help you remain faithful to Him at all times.



Going Deeper

1. Demonstrate the cycle of apostasy by using the face of a clock. _____

2. Explain and discuss with others how this truth applies to churches, denominations, universities and nations today. _____

3. Apply this cycle of apostasy to yourself and your own walk of faith. How is it manifested in your life? _____

4. How does this truth about apostasy present the need for and the hope of repentance and revival? _____

5. What does the hard reality that Israel went through this cycle seven times in 400 years show us about the character of man and the character of God? _____

6. How does the leadership vacuum during this period of Hebrew history relate to a failure on the part of Joshua? _____

7. Where are you right now on this cycle of apostasy? What changes do you need to make? _____
