

THE GOSPEL STORY

Lesson 6

"I have seen this people, and behold, it is a stiff-necked people."

Text Under Consideration: Exodus 32; Numbers 13-14; Judges 2; 1Samuel 8

Scriptural & Historical Context:

Recall that when the Lord brought Israel to Mt. Sinai He promised that they would be His "treasured possession among all peoples", but only if they "obey my voice and keep my covenant" (Exodus 19.5). Tragically, Israel rarely demonstrated a willingness to follow the voice of their God and thus they consistently broke His covenant. This lesson will examine four occasions when Israel refused to follow their God, spanning from immediately following the Exodus in 1440 B.C. until when Israel rejected the Lord in favor of a king in ~1000 B.C.

Key Verses & Events:

- 📖 Israel breaks the covenant by worshipping a golden calf (Exodus 32, ~1440 B.C.).
- 📖 Israel refuses to take the land of Canaan and are sentenced to wander in the wilderness until that generation perished (Numbers 13-14, ~1440-1400 B.C.).
- 📖 Under the leadership of Joshua, Israel enters Canaan and quickly defeats the major armies in the land (Joshua, 1400 B.C.).
- 📖 After the death of Joshua, Israel forsakes the Lord for the idols of Canaan. A series of military defeats follows, each time the Lord using a Judge to deliver his people (Judges - 1Samuel 7, 1375 - 1000 B.C.).
- 📖 Israel requests for a king to rule over them so they can be like the other nations (1Samuel 8, ~1000 B.C.).

Creation
Genesis 1-2 · Undated

The Flood
Genesis 6-9 · c. 2350 BC (trad.)

Abraham
Genesis 12-25 · c. 2000-1800 BC

The Exodus
Exodus · c. 1446 or 1270 BC

Conquest of Canaan
Joshua · c. 1406-1380 BC

David's Reign
2 Samuel · c. 1010-970 BC

Babylonian Captivity
2 Kings 25 · c. 605-539 BC

Return from Captivity
Ezra, Nehemiah · c. 538-432 BC

Life of Jesus
Gospels · c. 6/4 BC – AD 30/33

Establishment of the Church
Acts 2 · c. AD 30/33 (Pentecost)

The Story

1. Israel quickly broke the _____ they swore to keep. While Moses was on Mt. Sinai for 40 days, the impatient Israelites demanded Aaron make them a golden calf — violating God’s command against carved images regardless of whether they intended it as a representation of the Lord Himself.
2. Their sin went deeper than ____ - _____. By wanting gods “who shall go before us” on their own terms, Israel was attempting to redefine their relationship with God — replacing submission to His leadership with self-determined religion.
3. Moses interceded and God relented, but Israel didn’t _____. One year later, on the border of the Promised Land, the people refused to trust God’s promise and wanted to return to Egypt — despite the testimony of Joshua and Caleb that the Lord would give them victory.
4. _____ had consequences. An entire generation was condemned to die in the wilderness, a direct fulfillment of God’s judgment on those who refused to trust Him despite witnessing His signs and wonders.
5. A new generation entered and took the land — by God’s _____, not their own _____. Joshua led Israel to conquer Canaan, fulfilling God’s promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
6. The cycle of unfaithfulness continued in the period of the _____. The next generation did not know the Lord — partly because Israel failed to pass on what God had done — and repeatedly turned to other gods over a span of 300–400 years.
7. Israel eventually rejected God as _____. Demanding a human king “like all the nations,” Israel once again forgot that the Lord Himself was their protector and ruler — a rejection God took personally.
8. God remained faithful to His _____ throughout. He did not destroy Israel even when they deserved it, because doing so would have broken His promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. His faithfulness was unconditional even when theirs was not.
9. The root problem was always a lack of _____. Israel’s repeated failures — the golden calf, the wilderness rebellion, the judges cycle, the demand for a king — all traced back to their unwillingness to trust and believe God despite overwhelming evidence of His power and love.
10. The story points forward to a greater _____. Israel’s rejection of God’s rule didn’t end His reign. The gospel reveals that a descendant of David would be the eternal Son of God, whose kingdom never ends — the ultimate fulfillment of what Israel’s history was always pointing toward.