

# Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

## *God Sends Help: A Study from Judges*

### Lesson 2: God Sends Othniel

#### Bible Text

Judges 2:11-12, 15-16, 18-19; 3:5-7, 9-11

#### Memory Verse

"Have no gods other than me." (Exodus 20:3)

#### Word List

**culture:** a group of people's beliefs and ways of doing things

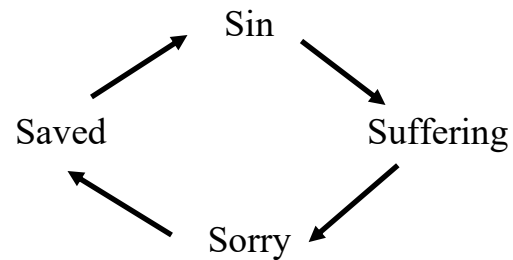
**patterns:** the repeated way in which something is done or happens

**Patterns** are a part of life. We see them in nature. Winter becomes spring. Spring becomes summer. Summer becomes fall. Fall becomes winter, and it repeats year after year.

As I write this, I am taking care of my six-month-old grandson. We have patterns in our day. He sleeps, eats, plays, and goes back to sleep. This same pattern happens at least four times a day. He is growing and learning as we follow this pattern.

There was a pattern in the way the people of Israel acted. We will see this pattern through all the book of Judges. It is a hard pattern. But the people do not learn much

from it. We know this because they repeated their actions again and again.



The pattern started with sin. Sin is when people disobey God. The people of Israel wanted to live their lives their way, not God's way. They worshipped other gods and did many wrong things. God warned them that their sin would bring suffering. But they kept sinning anyway.

Next, God did what He told them He would do: He let them suffer for their sins. Their sins brought sad events into their lives. Other countries came to fight them, hurt them, rob them, and steal their land. There was much suffering for many years.

Next, the people would be sorry for their sins. They cried out to the One True God for help. They had stopped worshipping Him, but now they needed His help.

Lastly, God would save them from their troubles. He heard their cries for help and sent a judge to help them. God would be with the judge and help that person end the suffering. Sadly, when that judge died, the people would go back to their sinning. And the pattern would begin again.

**Sin, Suffering, Sorry, and Saved**  
**(Judges 2:11-12, 15-16)**

**11 Then the people of Israel sinned in the eyes of the Lord. They served the Baals, the gods of the Canaanites.**

**12 They turned away from the Lord, the God of their fathers, Who had brought them out of the land of Egypt. They followed other gods of the nations around them, and worshiped them. So they made the Lord angry.**

**...15 The Lord punished them everywhere they went. The Lord did what He had told them and promised them He would do. The people were very troubled.**

**16 Then the Lord gave them special men to judge between what was right or wrong. These men saved them from those who robbed them.**

The pattern began when the people began to sin when they served, followed, and worshipped other gods. These were idols and not the God who saved them from slavery in Egypt. They turned away from the God of their fathers, the One who loved them. They chose not to obey the One who brought them to the special land they were now living in. Their sins always meant they turned away from God.

This sin came with a price—suffering. God told them that if they turned away from Him and worshiped other gods, there would

be trouble. They would be punished for their sin. Their sin brought suffering.

“If you do not keep the agreement the Lord your God made with you, and serve other gods and worship them, then the anger of the Lord will burn against you and you will be destroyed from the good land He has given you” (Joshua 23:6).

They cried for help from the God who had helped them before. In their suffering, they saw their sin and were sorry. God saw their suffering and heard their cries.

Because they were sorry, God saved them by choosing a new leader (a judge) for them. These judges helped them to see what was right and wrong. They would lead the people to win battles against those who were hurting them.

**Help Sent**  
**(Judges 2:18-19)**

**18 When the Lord gave them special men to judge them, the Lord was with the judge. And He saved them from those who hated them. For the Lord showed them pity because of their pain when others made it hard for them and hurt them.**

**19 But when the judge died, they would turn again and act worse than their fathers. They would follow other gods and serve them and worship them. They would not give up their sinful acts or their strong wills.**

When God saved them, do you think the people worshiped Him and never again turned to other gods? Sadly, no. They did not. While the judges were living, they listened to these leaders sent by God. God was with the judges. The judges stopped the nations who were hurting the people of God. The pain ended. The suffering stopped. The people listened to the judges and did what was right.

But everything changed each time the judge died. They forgot their suffering and went back to their sinful ways. They did worse things than their families before them. The pattern repeated again.

### **A Cause and Repeat (Judges 3:5-7)**

**3:5 The people of Israel live among the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites.**

**6 They married their daughters. They gave their own daughters to their sons, and they**

**worshiped their gods.**

**7 The people of Israel did what was sinful in the eyes of the Lord. They forgot the Lord their God and served the Baals and the Asheroth.**

The problem started when they did not obey God. God told them to take the land for themselves. They did not drive out the Canaanites who served the Baals. They did not drive out the many nations who followed other gods. They did not tell the other nations about the One True God that had done so much for them.

They not only lived with these people who worshiped other gods but they also married them. They were not only people from other nations but they became their family. As family, they changed their own **culture**. They changed their ways to please their new wives and husbands. They did not give the truth of God to their new families.

### **A New Judge (Judges 3:9-11)**

**9 But the people of Israel cried to the Lord. And the Lord gave the people of Israel someone who would save them. He gave them Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother.**

**10 The Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he led Israel. When he went out to war, the Lord gave Cushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia**

### **Things to Think About**

1. What was the bad pattern that the people followed in the time of the judges? Do you see this pattern today?
2. Why is it so easy to put other things first in our lives? Do you have other gods in your life? What are they?
3. Do you know someone whose life has been changed by Jesus? How is that person different?
4. Will you tell others what you have learned today?

into his hand. He was stronger than Cushan-rishathaim.

**11 The land had rest for forty years. Then Othniel the son of Kenaz died.**

The people were suffering and crying out to God. God gave them their first judge, Othniel. This was the same Othniel who had listened to Caleb and obeyed God to drive out the nations in his area. He was much older but God made him strong with the Spirit of the Lord. He needed to be strong in the Lord.

He was able to lead Israel. With this special strength, he obeyed God and drove out the king of Mesopotamia. God gave him success as he led the people of Israel to follow God again.

Othniel was a great judge and leader. He taught the people well. Because of this, Israel had rest from the terrible pattern of sin, suffering, sorry, and saved. They were saved. They worshiped God only. They had 40 good years. Then Othniel died. Sadly, we know what will happen next. It is the pattern for the whole book of Judges.

### **Things to Remember**

The people of Israel were not the only people to follow this terrible pattern. People today follow it, too. We are all sinners. We let other things become more important than God, such as our own interests, our jobs,

money, even family or friends. These things become our idols. Some people in the world still worship false idols or statues. In time, suffering comes because of our actions. When we finally cry out to God and say we are sorry, He hears us and saves us. God does not send us a judge because He has already sent us Jesus to save us.

Jesus paid the terrible, final price for our sins. He died and came alive again so that anyone who believes in Him will be saved. The good news is that because Jesus came to save us, we do not have to keep repeating the pattern. Because He died, we are saved forever. There is no need for God to send a judge. Jesus is our Judge.

Instead of a bad pattern that repeats, there is a good pattern when we become followers of Jesus. When we sin, we tell God that we are sorry. God forgives us of our sin. We feel His love. We learn to put God first in our lives, not idols. We tell others about Jesus so they can be saved and changed, too.

When we tell God we are sorry for our sins, we are forgiven—because of Jesus. We are saved—because of Jesus. Sin has lost its power in our lives—because of Jesus. After we die, we will go to live with God forever—because of Jesus. There will be no more sin or suffering—because of Jesus. We will feel God’s love forever—because of Jesus.

If you are a follower of Jesus, you are free to live the life God has planned for you. If you are not a follower of Jesus yet, you can believe in Him today. You can start living a new life with a good pattern of forgiveness, freedom, and love—because of Jesus!

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