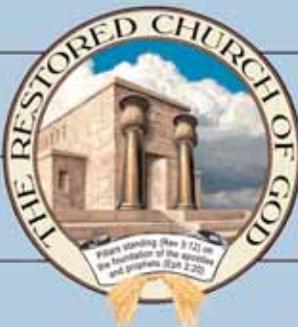


THE RESTORED CHURCH OF GOD

CHILDREN'S BIBLE LESSONS



Judges Rule Over Israel



LEVEL 4
LESSON 7

Judges

Rule Over Israel

If you recall from the last Lesson, the nation of Israel had crossed over many lands on their way to the Promised Land. They had to fight many people too. But they had finally reached the Jordan River—with the Promised Land just on the other side.

The time had finally come to enter the Promised Land. In this Lesson, we will learn how God divided the land between the tribes. We will also cover different judges whom God used when Israel would fall back into sin. The history of this forming nation is very exciting—and there is much to tell!

Be sure to have a pencil, paper and your Bible ready. Do not forget to look each scripture up in your Bible and fill in the blanks if they are provided.

Only Israel in the Land

As they were about to cross the Jordan River, God told the Israelites that they must make sure they put to death all the people who were living in the land promised to them. God in His wisdom knew that if the other nations were living among the Israelites, His people would begin to take on their customs, traditions and religion!

Notice God's command in Numbers 33:55 and fill in the blank spaces: "But if



you do not _____ of the land from before you, then it shall be that those whom you let remain _____ and _____ in your sides, and they shall _____ in the land where you dwell."

God knew that the example of the other nations would eventually lead Israel to false gods.

Land for Each Tribe

When they had first arrived at the Promised Land, Moses divided the lands according to God's command.

Certain cities called "cities of refuge" were created. These were towns that those who had accidentally killed someone could flee to for safety. God was setting up government for the people of Israel. He wanted to set up a system by which the people could be properly governed.

However, even though Moses was describing the borders for each tribe, how special cities would function and many other things, he was not allowed to enter the Promised Land. Remember the previous Lesson. Angry against the Israelite's bad attitude, Moses disobeyed God's command to simply touch the rock instead of striking it. In dealing strictly with Moses, God want-

ed to teach His new nation that it was important to never disobey God.

If Israel obeyed God, wonderful blessings would flow! On the other hand, God would deal sternly with Israel if the people disobeyed!

All of the Israelites were to live under the laws of God. Instead of each individual choosing to obey God, the entire nation was to live God's Way! They were to keep the Sabbath, including the annual Sabbaths—the Holy Days.

With the help of your parents, write out the seven annual Holy Days listed in Leviticus 23. _____

A New Leader

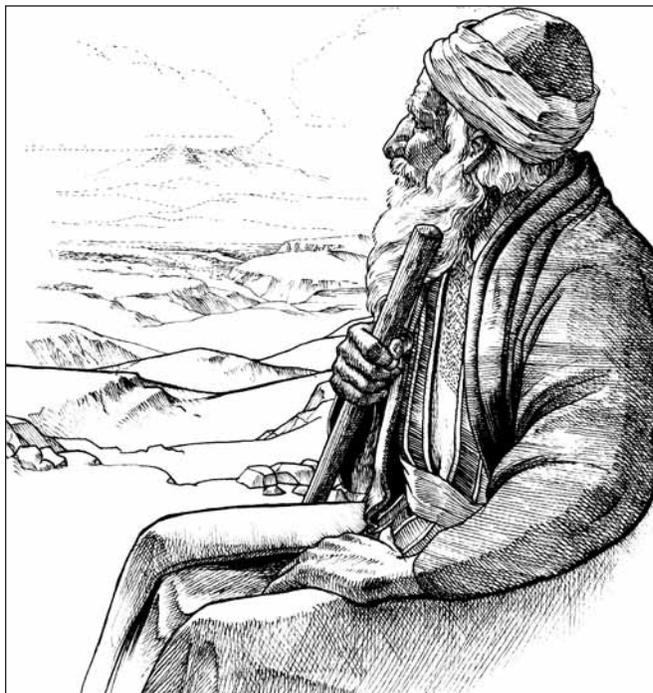
By this time, Moses was becoming very old. He also knew that he would not be allowed to enter the Promised Land. Understanding this, he called his servant Joshua to his side and told him that he would now become the human leader of Israel.

Joshua was humbled that he was chosen to lead the people into the Promised Land—but at the same time, he may have also felt a little overwhelmed. But Moses reassured him in front of the congregation. Notice what Moses said in Deuteronomy 31:7 and fill in the words:

“Be _____, for you must go with this people to the land which the LORD has sworn to their fathers to give them, and _____.”

God later told Moses what would happen after he died. He said that the people would turn from Him and be punished for it. Moses was then commanded to write a song for the people to learn, so they would know that turning away from God was foretold!

Shortly after, Moses was told by God to go up to a high mountain to see the Promised Land. This was the last thing Moses would see before he died. He lived a long life of 120 years.



Strengthened and inspired by all that he had learned from Moses, Joshua was ready to lead the people.

Test Your Memory:

1) Why did God want Israel to drive out the people from the Promised Land? _____

2) What would Israel receive if they obeyed God? _____

3) Who was the new leader of Israel? _____

Joshua Leads Israel

Right before going into the Promised Land, God spoke with Joshua. He wanted to encourage him and give him direction on how to take the new land.

Of course, this excited Joshua. He spoke directly with God. Can you imagine what that experience would be like? Write down what God said in Joshua 1:5: “_____

_____.”

These words greatly encouraged Joshua, and he prepared the people to take the Promised Land. Before leaving, Joshua reminded the Reubenites, Gadites and half the tribe of Manasseh that they had promised to help their people take the land. Only then would they settle on the east side of the Jordan (Joshua 1:12-15).

The tribes stayed true to their promise.

Spies Into the Land

In order to understand what they were up against, Joshua ordered two men to enter the land as spies. However, the King of Jericho received word that these men were sent!

As the spies looked around the city of Jericho, they did not realize that soldiers were looking for them—and wanted to arrest them! The two men came to the house of Rahab, and she allowed them to rest there.

The soldiers saw them enter her house and reported this to the King. The King dispatched his soldiers to her house to collect the two spies. Rahab had recognized that these men were sent by God, so she protected them from the soldiers. She told the

guards that they came to her house, but had since left toward the Jordan River. Quickly, the guards followed after the Israelite spies.

But Rahab had hidden the men in her straw roof. Once the soldiers left, she went to get the men. She told them that she protected them because she knew they were



sent by God. She then asked that, when the Israelites came and destroyed the city of Jericho, her family be protected because of the kindness she showed the spies.

They agreed that her family would be spared. Relieved, she then let them down the city wall, as her house was positioned along the wall. The Israelite spies made their way back to the camp.

A Mighty Miracle

When the people were ready to cross the Jordan River, God told Joshua to have one man from each tribe take a rock from the Jordan and carry it upon their shoulder as they crossed. They would cross together with the Ark of the Covenant.

As they approached the river's edge, the river stopped flowing! As the Ark approached the river, it completely dried. This allowed the men to cross the river as if it were dry land. The people were amazed at this mighty miracle. The armies were able

to cross the river with ease because God performed a miracle to prove that He was with the people.

God is still performing miracles today for those who obey Him! When you are in Church services, you will sometimes hear announcements of brethren healed of diseases, or exciting new opportunities for God's Work. Realize that those are miracles!

The carrying of the stones through the river was so that the people of Israel would remember this day and tell the story to their children, and that the story would continue for all time. And it has. You have heard that story after several thousands of years!

Test Your Memory:

- 1) Name the three tribes who promised to help Israel. _____
- 2) Who helped the Israelite spies? _____
- 3) What did God do to the Jordan River so Israel could cross? _____

Meeting His Creator

When camping one evening right before the Passover, Joshua saw a man standing in the distance with a sword in his hand. Joshua bravely approached him and asked if he were a friend or an enemy.

It was not just a man—but God was standing before Joshua. Joshua fell to his face and worshiped Him. He asked God what we wanted him to do. God commanded that the

Israelite army completely destroy the city of Jericho.

The March to Jericho

As God talked with Joshua, He gave specific instructions regarding how Israel was to attack Jericho. Joshua passed these instructions on to the people. He also told them that were not allowed to take anything out of the city except for the gold, silver, bronze and iron. The armies were to spare only Rahab, her family and her belongings.

The army circled the city of Jericho. Then, each day for six days, the priests marched around the city with trumpets made of rams' horns, carrying with them the Ark. As they marched around the city, they blew the trumpets, but made no other sounds. The entire army kept silent. Imagine the confusion of those in the city! This was repeated each day.

Then, on the seventh day, when the priests went around the city and began to blow their trumpets, Joshua commanded the people to shout!

The noise was intense! While they were shouting the wall surrounding Jericho crumbled to the ground, leaving the city defenseless. The army quickly overtook the city and destroyed everything. They burned it to the ground and took only what they were supposed to take, destroying everything else.

Only Rahab was spared, because of the



kindness she showed to the spies (Hebrews 11:31). Her family lived among the Israelites for many more generations.

God delivered Jericho into the hands of Israel. They obeyed Him, and He gave them a great victory!

Disobedience Brings Disaster

Not all of the Israelites obeyed what God said. The Israelites next battle was against the people of Ai. Since there were far less people in Ai, only 3,000 of the Israelite army went against the city.

However, the men of Ai killed 36 of the Israelite army. The men became afraid and fled from the battle. Joshua was shocked that the Israelites were defeated!

Notice his reaction in Joshua 7:6 and fill in the blanks: “Then Joshua _____, and _____ before the ark of the LORD until evening, he and the elders of Israel; and they put dust on their heads.”



Joshua did the correct thing—he immediately sought God when he encountered a problem. He did not try to solve it on his own; he looked to God for a solution!

God answered, and said, “Get up! Why do you lie thus on your face? Israel has sinned, and they have also transgressed My covenant which I commanded them. For they have even taken some of the accursed things, and have both stolen and deceived; and they have also put it among their own stuff” (Joshua 7:10-11).

The next day, Joshua gathered the people to find out who had stolen the items. They cast lots before each tribe, then each household, and finally before each man to appeal to God to reveal who had stolen the items. When the man was found, he was stoned for the sin he committed against God. All of his possessions and his entire household were destroyed and burned with fire.

When someone commits a sin, he is committing it directly against God. He takes it personally—but He is also merciful if you repent and confess to Him what you have done.

Israel had repented for the sin that was done, and once again, God was with them.

Test Your Memory:

- 1) What items were the Israelite army to take from Jericho? _____
- 2) What caused the walls of Jericho to fall? _____
- 3) Who was the real source of that miracle? _____

God on Their Side

Joshua gathered 30,000 men and went to take the city of Ai. He told his men that most of them would go up behind the city

and wait. Then a small band of men, similar to the number that had been defeated in the first battle, would approach the city from the front.

When the men of Ai saw the small Israelite army, they quickly went out to battle with them. Pretending to be defeated, Joshua and his men pulled back and looked like they were fleeing. As Israel was being chased, the armies of Ai traveled farther and farther away from the city. In fact, every man in the city of Ai and even nearby Bethel chased the small army.

Joshua was then commanded by God to throw the javelin toward the city of Ai—signaling the other Israelites to attack!

The city was quickly overrun and burned. When the army of Ai saw their city being burned, they realized they had been fooled. But it was too late. Joshua and his men stopped fleeing and attacked the army chasing them.

All their enemies were quickly destroyed, and victory was given to the people of Israel. This time the people obeyed God, and He delivered their enemies into their hand!

When we obey God, He helps us in all areas of our life.

Joshua's Mistake

Some time later, a group of men approached the Israelite camp. They told Joshua that they had come in peace and wished to become servants of Israel. They looked like they had traveled from a far land, and they seemed sincere to the men of Israel and their leader, Joshua.

So Joshua and the leaders of Israel swore an oath with these men that they would not attack their cities. In return, the people in those cities would be servants to Israel. After the matter was settled, the men returned to their cities.



After a few days, Israel approached four cities. The leaders of Israel realized that the men had lied to them—these were the cities from which they came! Because of the oath, Israel did not attack the cities (Joshua 9:1-27).

If Joshua and his men had *first* sought God, they would have known that the men deceived them. Instead, they trusted in their own abilities and were prevented, because of their oath, from taking these cities.

You must always look to God first before you decide any important matter. When you want to do something, you should also go to your parents and ask what they think. They know much more than you, and can help you make a good decision—just like God would have helped Joshua from taking a foolish oath!

A Long Day

When word reached the nearby cities that Israel had completely destroyed Jericho and Ai, great fear swept across the land. Also, it became known that the great city of Gibeon made peace with the Israelites.

This greatly angered the kings of Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish and Eglon, who conspired together to attack Gibeon for making peace with the Israelite invaders. These cities gathered their armies and attacked Gibeon.

The Gibeonites sent word to Israel and asked that they please protect their servants and assist them in battle (Joshua 10:4-6).

This time, Joshua first sought counsel from God before he went to battle. Write down what God said in Joshua 10:8: “_____

_____.”

So the men went into battle and continued to fight the armies that fought against Gibeon. The battle took a very long time, and Joshua realized they would not have defeated the armies before the sun was to set. So he prayed to God that the sun would stay in its position until the battle ended. (Joshua 10:12).

Again, God performed another miracle. The sun stopped moving through the sky. It froze in position until all of Israel’s enemies were destroyed. Since Joshua first sought God’s will in the matter, God fought with Israel and performed this mighty miracle!

Death of a Leader

After many more years of battle, the Israelites had finally taken over the entire Promised Land. Finally, they were able to rest from war. They fought as God had commanded, and now they were able to enjoy peace.

By this time, Joshua had become very old. When nearing death, he reminded the Israelites that they would prosper only if they stayed close to and obeyed God. He warned them of what would happen if they disobeyed. He also reminded them of the mighty miracles God performed from the time they left Egypt to each of the great battles He fought with them.

The Israelites were inspired and humbled by all that Joshua said to them. A short



while later, Joshua died. He lived to be 110 years old.

Test Your Memory:

- 1) What mistake did Joshua make? _____
- 2) What did God do to the sun during the battle? _____
- 3) How old was Joshua when he died? _____

Slipping Into Idolatry

Israel continued to follow God while the generation that was alive during Joshua’s time was still around. However, another generation came that did not directly experience God’s power and miracles. Instead of obeying God, they started to copy the nations around them.

Israel began to serve other gods, and this greatly angered the true God! They quickly

forgot the warnings of what would happen if they disobeyed Him.

With God no longer protecting them, they were overtaken by their enemies and sold into slavery. The nation that God took out of slavery hundreds of years ago had now placed themselves right back into chains!

God felt compassion for the afflictions that His people suffered as slaves and raised up a judge to lead the people back to their lands. When the judge was alive, the people would obey God and seek after His will.

When the judge died, the people would quickly turn back to worshipping false gods and breaking the Sabbath. This meant that God had to punish them again.

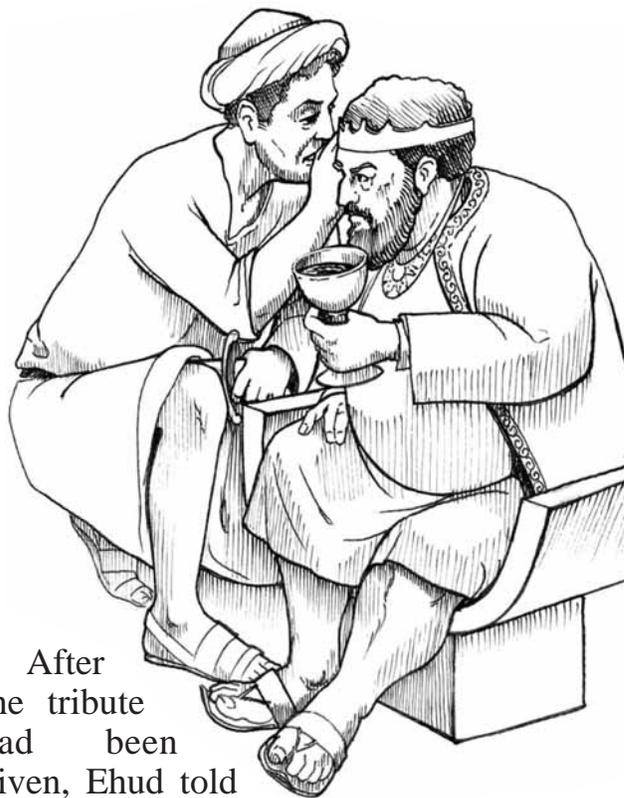
This cycle was repeated over and over again throughout Israel's history. God was very patient with Israel, just as He is with you. Even though you make mistakes, God will always forgive you if you try not to make the same mistakes again.

You may have noticed that Old Testament times were very bloody. There were many battles and lessons God had Israel go through. Since God is the one who gives life, He has the right to take it away. He knows that the people who died during the Old Testament times would be brought back to life in the future and be taught God's Way.

God is so merciful that he gives everyone a chance to live His Way!

Bravery of Ehud

When Israel's punishment had ended, God raised up a man named Ehud to lead them from slavery. Ehud was a very brave man. As was the custom, the people of Israel sent Ehud to pay tribute to the king of the Amorites. Ehud saw an opportunity and strapped a sword to the inside of his thigh.



After the tribute had been given, Ehud told the king that he has a secret message to tell him. The king told him to keep silent until everyone had left the room. Ehud realized God had delivered the king into his hands.

When he drew close, he told the king that it was a message directly from God and plunged the sword into the king's belly. The king died, and Ehud escaped unseen (Judges 3:16-22).

When Ehud returned to the camp of Israel, he led all the strong men to fight against the Amorites. With God on their side, they easily beat the armies of their enemies. The Israelites killed 10,000 Amorites that day. Not a single man escaped.

Truly, God delivered Israel from their enemies.

God Raises Up Deborah

Under Ehud's leadership, the Israelites obeyed God and did things that were pleasing to Him. But it did not take long after

Ehud's death that the people slipped back into Sabbath breaking and idolatry. This greatly angered God.

This time, Jabin, king of Canaan, was used to punish Israel. They served under this king for 20 years. God then raised up a woman—Deborah—to judge Israel.

God commanded the prophetess Deborah to summon a man named Barak to lead the Israelites in defeating Jabin's army. But Barak did not show courage. He would only fight the Canaanites if Deborah came with him! So she accompanied Barak and an army of 10,000 men to Mt. Tabor, where they camped.

Word had reached Sisera, the commander of Jabin's army, that Barak and his men had camped on Mt. Tabor. He quickly gathered his army and 900 chariots to fight the Israelites.

Notice what fearless Deborah said to Barak in Judges 4:14: "Up! For this is the day in which the LORD has _____

_____.

Has not the LORD gone out before you?"

With God on Israel's side, the Canaanites were no match for the Israelite army. They were victorious! Because of the fearlessness that Deborah showed, the Israelites were once again free from slavery.

Girls should take note of Deborah's actions. Ask your parents to discuss with you the events of Deborah's life. She was a brave woman and obedient to God. If you strive to obey God, you never know how He may use you.

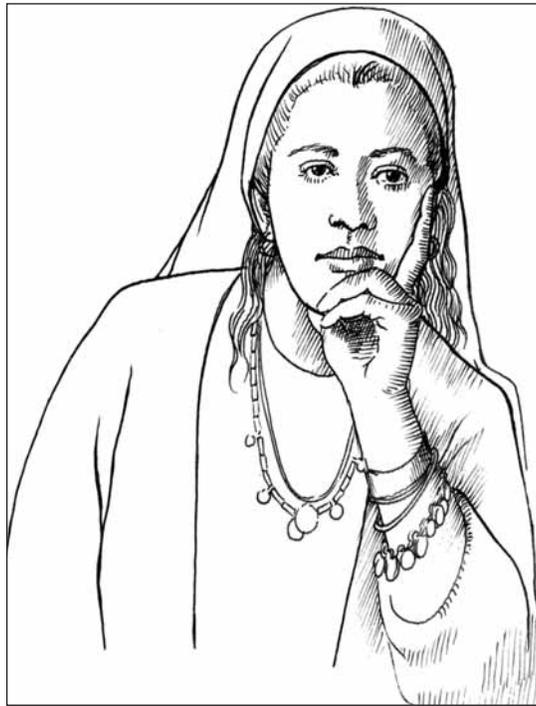
Israel enjoyed 40 years of peace while Deborah judged over them. But after her death, a familiar pattern emerged.

Test Your Memory:

1) What did God raise up to free Israelites from captivity? _____

2) Why were Israelites put into captivity?

3) What was the name of the woman God used to judge Israel? _____



Gideon Delivers Israel

Again, the Israelites began to disobey God. They did what they thought was right. Just like Israel, you must be careful not to assume you know right from wrong. You should always ask your parents when you are not sure.

As punishment, God allowed the Midianites to invade. Israelites served as slaves under the Midianites for seven years. Then, God raised up

another judge to lead them out of bondage.

Gideon was the man whom God chose to judge Israel. However, Gideon was not sure that God was with him. He asked God to show him signs. After the harsh punishment of the Midianites, Gideon had a hard time believing that the bondage would come to an end. It took a miracle from God to make Gideon understand that the man with whom he was speaking was God!

Gideon's first job was to tear down the altars to false gods that the people had built.

The morning after he did this, the people of the city found out that it was Gideon. They went to his father's house and demanded that Gideon be brought out to them.

But Joash, Gideon's father, wisely answered the crowd. Read his answer in Judges 6:31 and fill in any missing words: "Would you plead for Baal? _____? Let the one who would plead for him be put to death by morning! _____, let him _____, because his altar has been torn down!"

Joash told them that, if he were a true god, Baal would be able to defend himself. The men were speechless and left.

Gideon was still not convinced that God was with him. Before he was willing to attack the Midianites, he required even more signs from God. God had to perform two more miracles for Gideon to believe he was able to battle the army of the Midianites.

But God had a surprise for Gideon. A surprise that would greatly build Gideon's faith.

Gideon's Shrinking Army

God wanted the Israelites to understand it was HIS power that saved them from the Midianites. Read what He said in Judges 7:2: "The people who are with you are _____ their hands..."

God told Gideon to send home any man who was afraid to go to battle. To Gideon's surprise, 20,000 of his men went home. This left only 10,000 to fight against the coming army.

God told him that there were still too many men! He told Gideon to have the men follow him down to the river to drink. He was to separate to one side those who kneeled down and drank from the river. He was to separate to the other side those who lapped the water out of their cupped hand.

God wanted men who would always be ready for battle. Those who kneeled down were not the mighty men that God sought. He told Gideon to send them home.

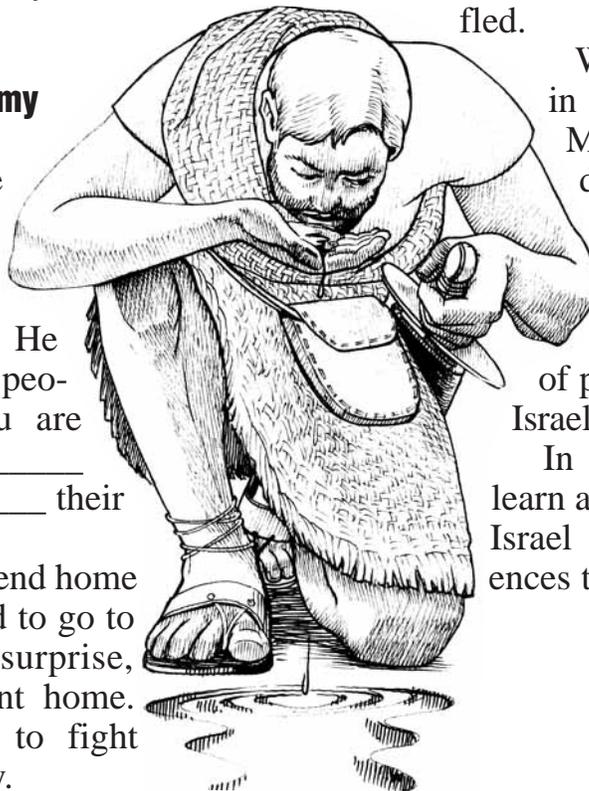
This left only 300 men to fight against the huge Midianite army. But God was on the side of the Israelites. Each of Gideon's men was to go down to the camp with a trumpet in their right hand, and a pitcher and torch in the left. On Gideon's signal, they were to blow the trumpets and smash the pitcher.

All the noise scared and confused the sleeping Midianite army. In the mass confusion, they began to attack each other. Much of the army died by their own swords. Those who survived were afraid, so they fled.

Without sleep and only few in number, the rest of the Midianites were easily defeated. With God on their side, only 300 Israelites destroyed a vast army of Midianites!

Israel enjoyed 40 years of peace when Gideon judged Israel.

In the next Lesson, we will learn about two special judges in Israel and the amazing experiences they had.



BIBLE MEMORY: Deuteronomy 31:7

WORD SEARCH

G	O	D	P	C	D	E	P	P	O	T	S
I	S	I	R	C	S	N	A	D	R	O	J
D	I	S	O	B	E	D	I	E	N	C	E
E	N	A	M	U	G	U	H	B	U	B	R
O	R	S	I	L	D	H	H	O	S	J	I
N	A	T	S	A	U	E	H	R	Y	Z	C
K	H	E	E	N	J	J	O	A	S	H	H
H	A	R	D	D	J	O	S	H	U	A	O
O	B	E	D	I	E	N	C	E	E	E	Q

Find These Words: GOD STOPPED JORDAN SUN AI
SIN DISOBEDIENCE DISASTER OBEDIENCE PROMISED LAND
JERICHO JOSHUA JOASH DEBORAH GIDEON JUDGES EHUD RAHAB