

## Aim of lesson

To show how God has judged in the past and how this has established principles for his judgments to come.

## Bible background

Genesis 3:16-23; Leviticus 10:1-7; Numbers 15:32-36; 2 Samuel 6:6-9; 2 Samuel 12:1-14; John 8:1-11; Matthew 23:13-15, 28-39

## Preparation required

Read through the passages referred to and build up your own picture of God's attitude to those who have fallen short of his standards.

## Suggested outline of lesson

Ask the young people to read through the situations referred to in the students' notes - or others of your own choosing - with a view to assessing God's judgments and mercy. They could each take a separate example and be prepared to explain to the others:

Together build up your conclusions about the way God deals with us and get the students to write them in their books. They should discover something like:

- God always does what he says.
- God wants us to repent and learn from what we have done.
- God will always forgive us if we are repentant but those who blatantly set themselves against him will not be forgiven.
- God's forgiveness does not depend on whether the sin is 'serious' or not, but on whether the sinner is repentant.
- God may forgive us but that does not mean that he will save us from the consequences of our actions.

Now get the young people to look at the remaining passages, and think about what they might learn from them:

1 Samuel 16:4-12	We do not know what people are really like inside, so we are not in any position really to judge them.
1 Peter 3:1-5	God's measure of people's worth is very different from the common human assessment.
Psalms 139:1-5	God understands us completely, even knows our thoughts before we think them.
Matthew 7:1-5	Our judgment is clouded by the fact that we are sinners ourselves. God will judge us as we judge others.
Romans 2:1-4	Because we are sinners we are in no position to condemn other people.
1 Corinthians 6:1-6	God expects us to take the best decisions we can when we are faced with difficult situations.

## Relevance to our lives

We all need to be aware of how God requires us to worship him by our behaviour but it is also important that we understand his mercy when we inevitably fall.

## **Prayer**

Our Father in heaven, having heard of your judgment we pray that you will help us and strengthen us to follow in Christ's footsteps that we may be found worthy of a place in your kingdom through the grace which we have seen displayed in your word. Amen.

## **Other suggestions for activities**

- Suggest that the young people imagine that they were a disciple who was present when Ananias and Sapphira were punished by God. How would they explain what happened?
- Ask them to list privately things they have done wrong. Then go through the list and decide whether they have suffered as a result. Have they been forgiven? Have they forgiven others for similar offences?
- Go through Psalm 51 with the young people. Explain the circumstances of the psalm and notice how David felt as his prayer to God progresses and he is assured God will forgive him.