



SAMSON

2 Studies in Judges 13 - 16

For Group, Individual & 1:1

Welcome to “Samson”

These studies accompany a short teaching series from the book of Judges, focusing on the story of Samson.

Although the teaching series will cover three Sundays, there are only two studies for the Samson series, as the following James study guide includes an overview of the book of James, which can be done the week before the Sunday teaching starts.

If you're using these studies in a **Bible Study Group**, try to make sure you've read the passage and done your preparation before you meet. This will be of great benefit not only to you, but also to the other members of your group.

If you're a **Bible Study Group Leader** please don't feel that your group needs to answer every question in every study. With such a wide variety of ages and personalities in our church, we have included a number of different types of questions, including some which reflect on the same points, just from slightly different perspectives. Please choose the questions most appropriate for your group.

If you're doing these studies **individually**, why not let someone know you are doing so, and arrange a time to meet with them when you've finished (or even before) to let them know how your life is being changed by God's Word.

Always surround your time looking into God's Word with prayer, asking God to change your heart and life so that you – with God's people – might become more and more like our Lord Jesus Christ.

Study 1 Leaders' Notes

Judges 13 & 14

So Much Promise

Judges 21:25 describes the situation in Israel in the time of the Judges, "In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as they saw fit."

Notice throughout the chapter, that Manoah's un-named wife is the one who appears to understand and takes seriously the angel's message. Manoah himself is pictured almost comically, trying to get a handle on the situation but generally failing!

13:1 In the book of Judges, the Israelites display a cycle of sinful rejecting of God, then suffering under their enemies, then crying out to God, then being rescued by a leader raised up by God. As the story of Samson opens, the Israelites have been oppressed for 40 years, and there is no sign of any crying out to God in repentance and hope.

The Philistines lived in Canaan, near the sea. Joshua 13:2 notes that the Israelites had not been able to remove the Philistines from the land as God had commanded.

13:3 Other women who are supernaturally enabled to give birth though childless include Sarah (Genesis 11:30 & 18:11, Hannah (1 Samuel 1:1 - 20), Rebekah (Genesis 25:21), Rachel (Genesis 30:1 & 22), Elizabeth (Luke 1:7 & 36), and Mary (Luke 1:26 - 38).

13:7 While a Nazirite vow (Numbers 6) was usually taken for specific period of time, Samson was a slightly different case, a Nazirite "from the womb until the day of his death."

14:6 Touching the carcass was a violation of the Nazirite vow, but even eating the honey which was in contact with the carcass was forbidden for every Israelite (Leviticus 11:24 - 25)

14:15 Note the deplorable threats of the Philistines, even towards one of their own!

14:1 - 20 Samson's marriage to a Philistine woman is emblematic of Israel's relationship with their pagan neighbours.

Study 2 Leaders' Notes

Judges 15 & 16

A Victorious Defeat

15:3 Samson's words sound an ominous warning for what is to follow, but also suggest that he may be mindful of some unjustified acts in his recent past!

15:10 The violence and retaliation continues to escalate, but even so, God is able to bring his purposes about.

The men of Judah are eager to hand one of their own over to the enemy in order to live under Philistine rule in peace. This is a far cry from obedience to God's command to occupy the land of Canaan and drive out God's enemies.

15:11 Samson's victories against the enemies of God are individual acts, rather than victories of Israel's army. This may be a reflection on the state of Israel and their willingness to submit to the subjugation thrust upon them by the Philistines

16:1 Gaza was in Philistine territory. He travels there voluntarily in verse 1, and as a defeated prisoner in verse 21.

16:13 It is not that Samson's hair possessed a magical strength, this came from his being set apart for the Lord's purposes. The uncut hair was a symbol of this devotion.

16:17 - 20 The greater tragedy in this incident is not that Samson is overcome by the Philistines, but that he has so despised his identity and mission, and turned his back on God such that "the LORD had left him."

16:22 Notice the hope offered by the narrator's comment that Samson's hair "began to grow again." God is still achieving his purposes!

Study 1 - Judges 13 & 14

So Much Promise

- 1.** What stories do you know surrounding your birth?

- 2.** When you were younger, did you have a friend of whom your parents did not approve?

- 3.** Have you ever encountered an unexpected saviour? What was it about them that made you unready for the help they offered?

Read Judges 13

- 4.** What do we learn about Israel in this section?

- 5.** What is the significance that Israel had not “cried out to the Lord” as they have previously? (See 6:6, 10:10, etc.)

- 6.** What do these verses teach us about Manoah and his wife?

7. Can you think of other women in the Bible who are described as unable to have children, in similar terms to Manoah's wife? What does this pattern lead you to expect of this child?

8. What is God's intended purpose for Samson's life?

Read Judges 14

9. What warning signs do you see here, that suggest Samson is turning his back on God's pattern for life

10. Numbers 6 describes the requirements for those who have taken a Nazirite vow. How is Samson's disregard for these requirements and the life of an Israelite reflective of a broader pattern among God's people?

11. How does God's intention for Samson's life appear to stand at the end of chapter 14?

12. What do we need to remember as we think about God enabling Samson to kill thirty Philistines?

13. What are some of the ways in which we see God at work, controlling events, and driving his purposes forward in these two chapters?

14. How have you seen God working things for good in your life despite the circumstances?

15. What similarities or differences do you notice between the rescue that Samson provides and the rescue Jesus provides?

16. Judges 21:25 says that in the time of the Judges, “In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as they saw fit.” To what extent do you think this description applies to our experience of the world?

17. What lessons do we learn from this section with regards to:

- God

- Our World

- The work of Christ

Study 2 - Judges 15 & 16

A Victorious Defeat

- 1.** Are you any good at keeping secrets?
Can you recall ever having a secret that you dearly wanted to share?
- 2.** What's the worst haircut story or experience you know?
- 3.** What's the most memorable wedding you've ever been to? What makes it stand out in your mind?

Read Judges 15

- 4.** How do you react to the episode of Samson's revenge in verses 1 - 8?
- 5.** In verse 11 what do we learn about Judah's relationship to the Philistines?
- 6.** What does this indicate about their commitment to God's command to occupy the land of Canaan and drive out God's enemies?
- 7.** Why do you think God continually empowers Samson, even though he is repeatedly disobedient?

Read Judges 16

8. Why do you think Samson revealed the secret of his strength to Delilah?

9. Verse 17 makes it clear that Samson understood that he was set apart from birth to serve God. How does this shape your understanding of these two chapters?

10. How would you describe Samson's character and the ordering of his priorities?

11. Do you see any evidence of a change in Samson's character after his final capture by the Philistines?

12. Where in this story can you identify signs of God's grace?

13. What similarities or differences do you notice between the rescue that Samson provides and the rescue Jesus provides?

14. Why do you think God answers Samson's prayer (16:28 – 30), even though he has turned his back on God so many times?

15. What do these chapters teach us about God's sovereignty and the actions and choices of individuals?

16. What lessons do we learn from this section with regards to:

- God

- Israel

- Our World

- The work of Christ

17. "The hero of this story, is not Sampson, but God." What evidence to back up this statement?

18. Can you think of ways in which you have (in hindsight) seen God work his purposes out in your life or experience, even if you were unaware at the time?



TRINITY MOUNT BARKER

A TRINITY NETWORK CHURCH

Office: 9 Hampden Road, Mount Barker SA 5251
08 8398 2827
info@tmb.church
www.tmb.church