

COMMUNITY GROUP STUDY GUIDE

Miraculous, Mighty, & Messy

JUDGES 13-15

OVERVIEW

The famed philosopher Frederich Nietzsche once said that “God was dead...and we have killed him.” While this is an impossibility, let us imagine for a moment a world where this was true. What would it be like? If we all just did what was right in our own eyes, what would our world be like? What if self was supreme? This is the question that the book of Judges seeks to answer.

APPLY // JUDGES 10-12

1. Read Judges 10:1-16. How does this passage show us sin takes us further than we think it will? How does this passage reveal that sin never delivers what it promises? Why do you think we often believe the lie that a “little” sin is harmless? Why is this not the case?
2. How do we resolve the “tension” between God saying “I will save you no more” and then God feeling compassion for his people and delivering them? What does this tell us about the seriousness of sin? What does this tell us about the character of God?
3. How do we see the Israel wanting things from God more than wanting God himself? What might this look like in our own lives?
4. Read Judges 11:29-40. How does Jephthah treat God? Why do you think he treats God this way? How might we be in danger of doing the same thing? What will prevent us from treating God like this?
5. Read Judges 12. What does this passage teach us about the seriousness of sin? How does this passage push us forward to the greater Judge, Jesus Christ?

STUDY // JUDGES 13-15

Study the passage of Scripture aiming to faithfully interpret and apply what you observe. Remember we study God’s word not just to increase our knowledge, but to increase our trust in and treasuring of Jesus Christ.

Note: Healthy Bible study asks three questions:

- **Observation:** What do I see?
- **Interpretation:** What does it mean?
- **Application:** Why does it matter?

These questions below are aimed at helping you observe and interpret the text. The following week’s questions for the same passage aim more toward application. While we cannot completely separate these three types of questions, this is a helpful framework to have in mind as you lead your group through the passage.

1. Read Judges 13. What do you notice about verse 1? What does this tell us about Israel?

2. With this last cycle, Israel disobeys and the Lord hands them over to the Philistines (disobedience and destruction). What usually happens next in the cycle, but doesn't happen here? What does this tell us about Israel's spiritual state at this time?
3. What promise does the angel of the Lord make to Manoah? How is this child to be raised?
 - a. Note the angel is referencing the Nazarite vow found in Numbers 6:1-21. This vow involved (1) not cutting your hair, (2) not eating or drinking any produce of vines, alcohol, (3) not having contact with any dead body.
4. What is this child going to grow up to do? Why is this remarkable given that Israel *hasn't* cried out for help? What does this tell us about God's character?
5. In verses 15-21, what do you notice about the interaction between the angel of the Lord and Manoah? Why do you think the angel of the Lord refuses to eat with Manoah and will not tell her his name? What does the angel of the Lord do instead?
6. Read Judges 14. What's the first thing you notice about Samson? How is he like Israel on the whole?
 - a. Note the emphasis on "uncircumcised Philistine" is important. This has nothing to do with race or prejudice. It has to do with marrying outside the covenant (cf. Dt. 7).
7. How well does Samson keep his Nazarite vow? What do you notice about Samson's overall character? Discuss specifics of his actions. How does this inform how we see Samson? How does this inform how we understand God's sovereignty and grace?
8. Read Judges 15. What does the text reveal about the consequences of Samson's sensuality?
9. Compare the Israelites actions now to when they initially came into the land. What does this tell you about how far the Israelites have moved away from God?

ACCOUNTABILITY

Relationships developed and deepened during accountability provide regular encouragement, and when necessary admonition, to spur each other on to delight in the supremacy of Jesus Christ. Ask one another heart-probing, clarifying questions, and help each other apply the gospel to your lives.

QUESTION: How would your life be different if you were completely convinced of the weight of sin and the wonder of the gospel?