

## **Miraculous Births: Samson Notes11262023am**

### **Judges 13**

Through the promise of the birth of Samson, we are given a foretaste of the salvation that will come through Christ.

#### **Introduction**

We are officially in the Christmas season. I love this time of year. But 58 years in, there's not much that's surprising about it anymore. It's fun with small kids; you get to live out the newness of it through them. But for myself, Christmas is pretty familiar. There's not much that's unexpected.

Don't get me wrong. I love Christmas. But people say familiarity breeds contempt. And I guess as I have grown familiar with Christmas, I understand why some people have a hard time with Christmas. The traditions are getting stale. There is not much to look forward to. And all the festivities and decorations do little to hide the pain of real life. Even while the dancing and festivities of the Macy's parade is going on in one channel, the next channel shows all the scandal, abuse, and horrors of the world. All the trappings, lights, and events of Christmas end up seeming like a thin coat of paint over a broken rundown world. And before long, that paint will be washed away. Is that all Christmas is? Are there any surprises left for cynical and hurting people like us?

God has always acted in surprising ways to save his people, and one of the ways he does that is through miraculous births. When all is dark, when hope is gone, a baby is born. Christmas is all about God accomplishing the unexpected, the astonishing, the unthinkable in order to save his people. If this is how God has always acted, then maybe even in a broken and messed up world as ours, God still has something surprising to show us in his Word today.

Before I read Judges 13, let me give a bit of context. Up to this point, the people of Israel have been rescued from slavery in Egypt, they have been constituted as a nation belonging to God, and now, according to God's promises, he has settled them into the land of Canaan, the Promised Land.

But when we come to the Book of Judges, we hear the story of what happened after that first generation of leaders died. Though they had led the people in settling in the land, Israel did not yet have full possession of it. They had not fully driven out the Canaanites. And so, their final command was that Israel was to continue in obedience to God in conquering the land. Each tribe had been assigned their territory and they were to possess it.

And the rest of the Book of Judges is basically about Israel's failure to carry out that command. Instead of going to war, the Israelites got comfortable. They began mingling with the surrounding nations, adopting their horrific customs of child sacrifice and worshipping their pagan gods. As a result, God would hand the people of Israel over to their enemies and they would be oppressed. But then the people would realize their sin and cry out in repentance, and God in his mercy would raise up a deliverer, a Judge, who would defeat their enemies, bringing in a time of peace ... until the next time the people rebelled. This pattern of sin, oppression, repentance, deliverance, and peace is repeated at least six times throughout the Book of Judges. And yet as we move along the Book, the cycle seems to be spiraling downward, Israel becomes more and more like the nations around them, and their judges are shown to be deeply flawed.

Which brings us to Judges 13, the last of the judges highlighted for us in the story.

Let us consider this passage by looking at the main characters involved.

- 1. God Saves People Who Are \_\_\_\_\_.**
- 2. God Saves Undeserving People Through Unlikely \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.**
- 3. God Begins the \_\_\_\_\_ of His People Through a \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ Warrior.**

## **Conclusion**

Friend, this is what Christmas is all about. Why not take the time this Christmas season to know more about this Savior? We have free books. We have people who would love to have coffee with you. Talk to someone after the service.

This is the perspective we need to be reminded of during Christmas. It feels like we live in this broken, rundown world and Christmas is this veneer of festivities that we put over our lives for a season, which all gets washed away in January or whenever you take down your Christmas tree. And before we know it, we are back into the grind of our painful lives. But that's not what Christmas is.

Christmas is that time of year when we are reminded of the truth that God has sent to his people the true Savior of the world. And with his coming, a new age has dawned. God is undoing all that is wrong and broken with this world and with us. Christmas is the reality which defines our

world, even more than all the brokenness and suffering around us. Yes, there is injustice; yes, there is sin; yes, there is sickness and even death. But with the arrival of Jesus, those things are on the run. Their days are numbered. They will not have the final say. But Jesus, in all his infinite goodness and love, will reign.

And like Manoah and his wife, we rely on the promises of God, knowing that God has sent us a Savior and that God means to use us to proclaim his wonders. And though it seems that nothing has changed, we know better. We know that everything has changed. God's promises are true. Our lives are now forever charged with meaning and purpose.

So, brothers and sisters, take heart! Do not abandon your post. Do not give way to despair. Persevere in following the Savior. Because a new day has dawned. Let us walk in the light of his salvation.

So how does the story of Samson point to Jesus? There are quite a few ways actually.

#### **How Samson's Life \_\_\_\_\_ to Jesus**

- Samson's birth was announced to his mother by an angel just like Jesus' birth (Luke 1).
- Samson was born miraculously to an infertile mother like Jesus was born to a virgin mother (Luke 1).
- Samson's mission was to save Israel from the Philistines like Jesus' mission was to save the world from their sins (Matthew 1:21; Hebrews 9:28).
- Samson was a Nazarite because of specific vows he took, while Jesus was a Nazarene because he lived in Nazareth (Matthew 2:23).
- Samson was blessed by God and moved by the Holy Spirit, similar to Jesus (Luke 2:52; Matthew 3:16).

#### **How Samson's Life \_\_\_\_\_ with Jesus**

- Samson was arrogant and violent, while Jesus was humble and meek (Philippians 2:8; Matthew 5:5).
- Samson recklessly broke God's rules, while Jesus fulfilled them (Matthew 5:17).
- Samson was sinful in his thoughts, actions, and words, while Jesus never sinned (1 Peter 2:22).
- Samson succumbed to the temptations of Delilah, while Jesus never yielded to the temptations of the Devil (Matthew 4:1-11).
- Samson was captured reluctantly, while Jesus gave himself up willingly (1 John 3:16).