

## Small Group Guide: Jesus in the Book of Judges



### **Summary:**

In the Book of Judges, we discover a profound revelation of Jesus Christ hidden within the Old Testament. The story of Samson, born through miraculous circumstances, offers us a striking parallel to the coming of our Savior. As we explore Samson's life, we see how God uses even flawed individuals to foreshadow His ultimate plan of redemption. The cycle of sin, judgment, and deliverance in Judges mirrors our own struggles and reminds us of our constant need for God's grace. Through Samson's final act of sacrifice, with arms outstretched between two pillars, we're given a powerful image of Christ's crucifixion. This invites us to reflect on how God's plan of salvation has been woven throughout history, encouraging us to seek His presence in unexpected places and to trust in His overarching narrative of redemption.

### **Key Takeaways:**

1. The "angel of the Lord" in the Old Testament is often a physical manifestation of Jesus.
2. The book of Judges follows a cyclical pattern of sin, judgment, repentance, and deliverance.
3. Samson's life parallels aspects of Jesus' life and mission in surprising ways.

## **Discussion Questions:**

1. What stood out to you most from the sermon? Why?
2. The sermon discussed the "angel of the Lord" as appearances of Jesus in the Old Testament. How does this impact your understanding of God's presence throughout biblical history?
3. Reflect on the sin cycle described in Judges. In what ways do you see similar patterns in your own life or in society today?
4. Compare and contrast Samson's birth announcement with Jesus'. What similarities and differences do you notice?
5. The sermon drew parallels between Samson's final act and Jesus' crucifixion. What are your thoughts on these comparisons? How do they deepen your understanding of Christ's sacrifice?
6. Samson is described as a flawed judge who often acted out of self-interest. How does this contrast with Jesus' perfect righteousness? What can we learn from this comparison?
7. How does seeing Jesus foreshadowed in the Old Testament impact your faith or your approach to reading Scripture?

### **Practical Applications:**

1. This week, read through the book of Judges, looking for other potential parallels or foreshadowing of Jesus.
2. Reflect on areas in your life where you might be stuck in a "sin cycle." What steps can you take to break that cycle and draw closer to God?
3. Practice looking for Jesus in unexpected places in your daily life. Share any insights with the group next time.
4. Consider how God might use your weaknesses or past failures for His glory, just as He used Samson despite his flaws.

### **Closing Prayer**

Encourage group members to continue reflecting on these themes throughout the week and to come prepared to share insights at the next meeting.

### 5-day Bible reading plan and devotional guide:



#### **Day 1: The Angel of the Lord**

**Reading:** Judges 2:1-5, 11-23

#### **Devotional:**

As we encounter the Angel of the Lord in Judges, we're reminded of God's constant presence throughout history. This divine manifestation, believed to be pre-incarnate appearances of Christ, shows us that Jesus has always been active in God's plan for humanity. Reflect on how God has made Himself known in your life. Have there been moments where you sensed His presence in a powerful way? Consider how recognizing God's presence can transform your daily walk with Him.

## **Day 2: The Cycle of Sin and Redemption**

**Reading:** Judges 13:1-25

### **Devotional:**

The book of Judges illustrates a recurring cycle of sin, judgment, repentance, and deliverance. This pattern reflects our own struggles with sin and our need for God's grace. As you read about Samson's miraculous birth, consider how God works even in the midst of our failures. How have you experienced God's redemption in your own life? Take time to thank Him for His unfailing love and mercy, and ask for strength to break cycles of sin in your life.

## **Day 3: Strength in Weakness**

**Reading:** Judges 15:9-20

### **Devotional:**

Samson's story reminds us that God can use us despite our weaknesses. When Samson was bound and delivered to his enemies, God's Spirit empowered him to achieve victory. In our own lives, we often face situations where we feel powerless. Remember that God's strength is made perfect in our weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9). What areas of weakness can you surrender to God today, trusting in His strength?

## **Day 4: The Cost of Compromise**

**Reading:** Judges 16:4-21

### **Devotional:**

Samson's downfall came through compromising his calling and giving in to temptation. His story serves as a warning about the dangers of letting our guard down spiritually. Yet even in Samson's failure, we see God's willingness to use him one last time. Reflect on areas in your life where you might be compromising your faith. Ask God for discernment and strength to remain faithful to your calling.

## **Day 5: Victory Through Sacrifice**

**Reading:** Judges 16:23-31

### **Devotional:**

Samson's final act, while flawed, foreshadows Christ's sacrificial death. With arms outstretched, Samson brought down his enemies, achieving in death what he couldn't in life. This imperfect picture points us to Jesus, who stretched out His arms on the cross to defeat sin and death once and for all. Unlike Samson, Jesus' sacrifice was perfect and complete. As you reflect on this, consider how you can live a life of self-sacrifice in response to Christ's ultimate sacrifice. How can you extend your arms in love and service to others today?