

Meet the Judges

Week 6: Samson – Hero or Zero?

WELCOME

Spend time relaxing and sharing together.

“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him” Romans 8:28a.

Sometimes when we look back over something that has happened and contrast how things ended up compared to how things might have been, we can often see God’s hand at work, as He blesses us and works good out of a situation.

Encourage people to share times when they have experienced this.

WORSHIP

Take time to praise God for the situations that have just been shared.

WORD

Samson was God’s chosen leader of Israel for twenty years, yet he was also someone who was deeply flawed and far from being a model follower of the Lord. As such, whilst some aspects of his story can seem to us to be deeply shocking, we can also be heartened as we see God working through him, and blessing him, despite his failings; an encouragement to each of all.

Growth Group Notes

Spring 2022



Samson' Revenge

Read Judges 15:1-8

1. In these verses, we read about Samson, his family and the Philistines, but who is noticeably absent from this very sad part of Samson's story? What can we read into this?

2. In verses 1-3 the actions of Samson's dysfunctional family cause him to want vengeance on the Philistines. Suppose you were a close friend of Samson, what guidance would you give him regarding his proposed actions?

You may find it helpful to look at Proverbs 24:29 and 29:22, and also Romans 12:19.

Samson's Captivity and Escape

Read Judges 15:9-20

3. In chapter 14 verse 5 an angel makes it clear that Samson would begin to deliver Israel from the rule of the Philistines, yet in verse 12 of chapter 15 we see the Judeans wanting to hand him over to them. Given this, what might we infer concerning the underlying values of the Judeans and their faith in God?

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4. In verses 9-12 we see three thousand men from Judah go to find Samson in order to hand him over to the Philistines. Why do you think they did this?
5. In verse 12 Samson gets the men of Judah to swear that they won't kill him. Why do you think he does this and in what ways might it guide how we are to live?

You may find it helpful to look at 1 Peter 3:9, Galatians 6:7b-8 and Matthew 5:44.

6. In verses 18-19 Samson cries out to God and God responds. What can we learn from these verses concerning the character of Samson, the nature of God and our own walk with God?

You may find it helpful to look at Philippians 4:19 and 1 Peter 4:10.

7. There are several times in chapter 5 where Samson seems to behave almost like a juvenile delinquent. Whilst God sticks with Samson, what do you think He thought of Samson's behaviour and what might it tell us about how God works in the world?

You may find it helpful to look at verses 4-5, 8 and 15, and also Philippians 2:13, Ephesians 2:10, Romans 8:28a and Romans 12:1-2.



WHAT NEXT?

Samson is recorded as being the leader of Israel for twenty years and yet, unlike the judges we have looked at in previous weeks, in his time Israel was never completely freed from oppression. It's easy to suggest that this was Samson's fault, but responsibility for this also rests with the people of Israel, who appear at times to hold back in letting God work with them and through them.

Are we sometimes a bit too like the Israelites? Are we sometimes too ready to go along with the ways of our world rather than standing up for God and fully letting him work through us? As you think about this, consider and discuss what we can do as individuals and as a church to better work with Him and for Him, either in Alsager or wherever else we might find ourselves.

Personal reflection

Rowan Williams is quoted as once describing mission as 'seeing what God is doing and joining in'. As you reflect on what you might do to better work with God to extend His kingdom, what do you see God doing already? Could these be things for you to join in with?