

# **The Book of Judges, Teacher's Guide**

## **Lesson 10: The Birth of Samson**

### **Judges 13:1-25**

#### **Teaching Aim (Teacher Orientation)**

Doctrinally, Judges 13 puts God's gracious initiative on full display. For the first time in the book the cycle of sin does not include Israel crying out for deliverance; the people are simply handed over for forty years, and the silence is total. Yet God moves anyway. He seeks out a barren woman, announces a deliverer, and sets the whole rescue in motion before anyone asks. This is the seedbed of a truth that runs straight to the gospel: salvation begins with God, not with us. We love Him because He first loved us (1 John 4:19), and while we were yet sinners Christ died for us (Romans 5:8). The aim here is to let students feel the weight of grace that comes first, while still guarding against any error that makes human response irrelevant. God's initiative does not erase human responsibility; Samson must still live as a Nazirite, Israel must still turn, and we must still obey the gospel (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16). The teacher should hold both together: God graciously begins, and we must faithfully respond.

The second doctrinal weight is consecration, being set apart wholly to God. The Nazirite vow marked Samson out from birth as belonging to the LORD, and the chapter quietly insists that holiness is not an accident but a calling. The lesson should point students forward to the New Testament call for every Christian to be holy as God is holy (1 Peter 1:15-16) and to present themselves as living sacrifices (Romans 12:1-2). The teacher must be careful not to bind the specific Nazirite practices on Christians; the vow itself was a shadow, and we are not under that law. What abides is the principle: a life genuinely set apart, distinct from the world, ordered around God rather than appetite. Manoah's wife, with her steady reasoning faith, models the reverent and trusting heart that such a life requires.

Beyond the doctrine, this lesson aims at the student's spiritual formation. It is meant to do more than inform; it is meant to form. The student should leave seeing the God who comes first, even into our silence and indifference, and should feel the pull to live as one set apart. The capstone question presses each person to name a specific way Jesus is setting them apart for Himself, so that the truth of grace and consecration does not stay abstract but takes root in habits, appetites, and daily obedience. A study of Samson's birth that leaves a student merely admiring an old story has missed its purpose; the goal is a heart stirred, like Samson, by the Spirit of the LORD, and a will bent toward holiness.

#### **Question 1**

##### **Student Question:**

*The chapter opens, “And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the LORD, and the LORD delivered them into the hand of the Philistines forty years” (13:1), yet unlike earlier cycles Israel does not cry out for help. What does it reveal about God’s character that He raises up a deliverer when His people have not even asked, and how does this display His gracious initiative rather than mere reward for repentance?*

### **Commentary and Teaching Notes**

The opening verse lands with a heavy familiarity: “And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the LORD.” The word “again” has by now become the drumbeat of Judges, marking the seventh and final cycle of the book. The Philistine oppression lasts forty years, the longest of any in Judges and a full generation, long enough that bondage had become the only life many Israelites had ever known.

What is strikingly absent here is the cry. In the earlier cycles, the pattern included a clear step: Israel groaned under oppression and cried out to the LORD, and He raised up a deliverer in response (compare Judges 3:9, 3:15, 4:3, 6:6–7). In chapter 13 that step is simply gone. There is no recorded repentance, no plea, no turning. The people have grown so comfortable in their compromise that they no longer even want rescue. They have, in a sense, made peace with the Philistines.

And yet God acts. Without being asked, without being moved by Israel’s tears, He sets in motion the raising up of a deliverer. This is the doctrinal heart of the verse: God’s initiative in salvation is gracious, flowing from His own steadfast love and covenant faithfulness, not earned by human merit or even prompted by human request. This does not teach that human response is unnecessary; later God will still call Israel and all people to turn and obey. But it does teach that the first move belongs to God.

This anticipates the gospel in a profound way. Paul writes that God commended His love toward us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8). John says we love Him because He first loved us (1 John 4:19). The barren silence of Judges 13, into which God speaks unbidden, is a shadow of the deeper silence of a world that did not ask for a Savior and yet was given one. Grace, by its very nature, comes first.

### **Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues**

- God’s gracious initiative in salvation: He moves toward His people before they move toward Him (Romans 5:8; 1 John 4:19), refuting any notion that we earn or initiate our own rescue.
- This gracious initiative does not eliminate human responsibility; God still calls people to turn and obey (Acts 2:38), so guard against a fatalism that treats response as irrelevant.
- Avoid Calvinistic misreading: God’s free initiative here is universal and gracious, an open call, not an arbitrary selection of some while others are passed over (compare the universal gospel call, Mark 16:15–16; Titus 2:11).

- The absence of Israel's cry warns against spiritual complacency, the danger of growing so used to sin that we no longer even desire deliverance.
- The forty years of oppression are real covenant consequences for persistent evil, illustrating that sin brings genuine bondage (Romans 6:16).

### **Discussion Prompts**

- Compare the cycle here with Judges 3:9 and 6:6–7. What is missing, and why does that absence make God's action even more remarkable?
- How does God's acting before Israel cries out help us understand grace, and where do you see this same pattern fulfilled in Christ?
- If grace comes first, what then is the place of our response? How do we hold God's initiative and human responsibility together?

### **Question 2**

#### **Student Question:**

*Israel had grown so used to doing evil "again" that no one seems to flinch or grieve over it. Where have you let a particular sin become so familiar that it no longer troubles your conscience, and what would it take to feel again how serious it really is?*

#### **Commentary and Teaching Notes**

The single word "again" carries an entire spiritual diagnosis. Sin in Israel was no longer a shocking departure but a settled routine. The conscience that should have recoiled had grown calloused through repetition. This is one of sin's most dangerous effects: it dulls the very faculty that warns us against it.

Scripture speaks elsewhere of consciences seared as with a hot iron (1 Timothy 4:2) and of hearts hardened through the deceitfulness of sin (Hebrews 3:13). The hardening is gradual and almost imperceptible. No one decides in a single moment to stop caring about sin; it happens one small compromise at a time, until the thing that once would have grieved us no longer registers at all.

This question turns the mirror toward the student. We all have areas where a particular sin has become so familiar that it has lost its sting, a habit of speech, a private indulgence, a grudge we have nursed so long it feels like part of us. The aim is honest self-examination, not despair. The same God who moved toward indifferent Israel moves toward us, and He calls us to feel afresh the seriousness of what we have grown numb to.

Recovering a tender conscience often begins with returning to God's word, with prayer that asks Him to search us (Psalm 139:23–24), and with the fellowship of believers who can exhort us daily while it is called today (Hebrews 3:13). The cure for callousness is not merely trying harder

to feel bad, but drawing near again to the One whose holiness reawakens our sense of sin's gravity.

### **Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues**

- Sin hardens the conscience through repetition (Hebrews 3:13; 1 Timothy 4:2); habitual sin is more spiritually dangerous than occasional sin because it numbs us.
- Each person bears responsibility for his own sin and his own hardening (Ezekiel 18:20); we are not helpless victims of an inherited corrupt nature but accountable agents.
- A tender conscience is recovered by drawing near to God in His word and prayer, asking Him to search the heart (Psalm 139:23–24).
- Mutual exhortation in the body of Christ guards against hardening (Hebrews 3:12–14).
- Persistent, unrepented sin can lead a Christian to fall away (Hebrews 3:12), refuting once-saved-always-saved and underscoring the urgency of repentance.

### **Discussion Prompts**

- Where has a particular sin become so familiar to you that it no longer troubles your conscience as it once did?
- What practices help reawaken a sense of how serious sin really is before a holy God?
- How can fellow Christians help you stay tender toward sin rather than hardened by it?

### **Question 3**

#### **Student Question:**

*The angel of the LORD appears to a barren, unnamed woman in the small town of Zorah rather than to a king or priest in a place of power (13:2–3). What pattern do you see in how God chooses to work, and how does this prepare us to understand the way He later comes in Christ?*

#### **Commentary and Teaching Notes**

When God determines to raise up a deliverer, He does not go to the palace or the priesthood. The angel of the LORD appears to a barren, unnamed woman in Zorah, a modest town in the territory of Dan. She is identified only as the wife of Manoah, and throughout the chapter she remains nameless, yet she is the one to whom God reveals His purpose first and most fully.

This is a consistent pattern in Scripture. God repeatedly works through the overlooked, the barren, the small, and the unexpected. Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, Hannah, and later Elizabeth were all barren women through whom God brought forth those who served His purposes. He chose the younger over the elder, the shepherd boy over his stronger brothers, a despised Galilean town over Jerusalem. As Paul would later say, God chose the weak and foolish things of the world to confound the mighty (1 Corinthians 1:27–29).

There is grace in this pattern. By working through those the world discounts, God makes unmistakably clear that the power and the glory belong to Him, not to human strength or status. No one could mistake Samson's barren-born deliverer, or the son of a Galilean carpenter, for the achievement of human greatness.

Above all, this prepares us to understand the coming of Christ. The Savior of the world entered not through Caesar's household but through a young woman in Nazareth, was laid in a manger, and was announced first to shepherds. The God who came to the wife of Manoah in Zorah is the same God who came to Mary in Nazareth, and the pattern of His humble, gracious approach is meant to teach us where to look for Him still.

### **Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues**

- God characteristically works through the lowly, the barren, and the overlooked to display that the glory is His (1 Corinthians 1:27-29).
- This pattern culminates in the incarnation: Christ came humbly, announced to shepherds, born of a lowly woman in an obscure town (Luke 2:7-12).
- The unnamed wife of Manoah is honored by God with revelation, reminding us that human status does not determine spiritual significance.
- God's choice of the barren womb shows His power to bring life and purpose where there was emptiness and no human prospect (compare Isaiah 54:1).
- We should watch for God's working in humble and unexpected places, not only where the world looks for greatness.

### **Discussion Prompts**

- Why does God so often work through the barren, the small, and the overlooked rather than the powerful?
- How does this pattern prepare us to recognize Christ, who came in lowliness?
- Where might you be tempted to overlook God's work because it does not look impressive by the world's standards?

### **Question 4**

#### **Student Question:**

*The angel came to a woman the world had overlooked and entrusted her with something of great purpose. In what overlooked or hidden corner of your life might God be wanting to work, and are you watching for Him there, or only looking where the world tells you to look?*

### **Commentary and Teaching Notes**

The angel of the LORD did not seek out a celebrated figure; he came to a woman in a quiet life, in a quiet town, carrying a quiet grief. And to her God entrusted a purpose larger than she could

have imagined. The text invites us to notice that God's significant work often begins in hidden corners, in the unglamorous and unnoticed places of a life.

This question presses the student to consider the overlooked or hidden corners of his own life. We are conditioned to look for God in the dramatic and the public, the mountaintop experience, the great open door. But more often He works in the ordinary faithfulness of home, in private prayer, in unseen acts of service, in the disciplines no one applauds. The danger is that, watching only the spotlight, we miss what God is quietly doing in the shadows.

Manoah's wife was watching; when the messenger appeared, she received the word, believed it, and acted on it. She did not dismiss the encounter because it came in an unexpected place. The application is a call to attentiveness, to live with eyes open to God's working in the hidden and humble parts of our days.

There is real comfort here for the person who feels overlooked. The world may never learn your name, as it never learned hers, yet God knows it, and the hidden corners of your life are not beneath His notice. He may be doing more there than anywhere the world can see.

#### **Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues**

- God works in the hidden and humble corners of our lives, not only in the public and dramatic (compare Matthew 6:4, 6).
- Faithfulness in the unnoticed and ordinary is precious to God and often where His most significant work begins.
- Spiritual attentiveness means watching for God where the world does not look, rather than only chasing visible significance.
- Those who feel overlooked are not overlooked by God, who knows and values each of His own (Luke 12:6-7).
- Receiving God's word with faith, as Manoah's wife did, requires a heart ready to believe and act.

#### **Discussion Prompts**

- In what hidden or overlooked corner of your life might God be wanting to work right now?
- Are you watching for God there, or only where the world tells you significance is found?
- How can you cultivate attentiveness to God's quiet work in the ordinary parts of your days?

#### **Question 5**

##### **Student Question:**

*The child is to be a Nazirite to God from the womb, set apart by abstaining from wine, from anything unclean, and from cutting his hair (13:4-5, 7; compare Numbers 6:1-8). What is the heart of consecration in Scripture, and why does God call certain people and ultimately all His people to be deliberately set apart to Him?*

## **Commentary and Teaching Notes**

The child is to be a Nazirite to God from the womb. The angel spells out the marks of this consecration: he is to drink no wine or strong drink, eat nothing unclean, and no razor is to come upon his head (13:4–5, 7). These echo the law of the Nazirite vow in Numbers 6, ordinarily a voluntary, temporary vow that an Israelite took for a season. Samson's case is extraordinary: his consecration is lifelong and begins before birth, appointed by God Himself.

The word Nazirite means separated or set apart. The vow's outward marks all pointed to an inward reality: a life distinctly devoted to the LORD, visibly different from the ordinary life around it. The uncut hair was a public sign of this devotion; abstaining from wine and the fruit of the vine set the Nazirite apart from common indulgence; avoiding the unclean guarded his dedication. The whole arrangement said, in the language of the body, this person belongs to God.

This is the heart of consecration in Scripture: to be set apart wholly to God, distinct from the world, ordered around His will rather than one's own appetites. It is not separation for its own sake or mere asceticism, but separation unto God, for His purposes. The Nazirite was a living picture of what all Israel was called to be, a holy nation, a people set apart (Exodus 19:6).

We must be careful here. The specific Nazirite practices were part of the old covenant law and are not binding on Christians; we do not take up the razor and the wine prohibition as commands. The vow was a shadow. But the principle abides and deepens in the New Testament: every Christian is called to be holy, set apart, presenting himself wholly to God (1 Peter 1:15–16; Romans 12:1). The teacher should draw the abiding principle forward while leaving the shadow behind.

## **Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues**

- Consecration means being set apart wholly to God, distinct from the world and ordered around His will (Numbers 6:1–8; the word Nazirite means separated).
- Samson's lifelong, God-appointed consecration was extraordinary compared with the ordinary voluntary, temporary Nazirite vow.
- The outward marks of the vow pointed to an inward reality of devotion; consecration is fundamentally a matter of the heart belonging to God.
- The specific Nazirite practices are old-covenant shadow and are NOT binding on Christians; do not bind the vow.
- The abiding principle of consecration carries forward to all believers, called to be holy and set apart (1 Peter 1:15–16; Exodus 19:6).
- Separation in Scripture is always separation unto God, not mere asceticism or withdrawal for its own sake.

## **Discussion Prompts**

- What is the heart of consecration, and how is it more than just rules about what to avoid?
- Why does God call His people to be deliberately set apart from the world?
- How do we carry forward the principle of consecration without binding the specific Nazirite practices on ourselves?

## Question 6

### Student Question:

*Samson's mother shared in his consecration while she carried him, ordering her own appetites for the sake of what God was doing through her. What appetite or freedom might the Lord be asking you to surrender right now, not because it is sinful in itself, but for the sake of being wholly His?*

### Commentary and Teaching Notes

The angel's instructions reach even the mother. While she carries the child, she too is to drink no wine or strong drink and to eat nothing unclean (13:4, 7, 14). Her own appetites are brought under the same consecration that marks her son. Before Samson can choose anything for himself, his mother orders her life around what God is doing through her.

This is a striking and tender detail. She is asked to surrender things not because they are sinful in themselves, wine and ordinary foods are not evil, but for the sake of the larger purpose God is working out. Her self-denial is an act of partnership with God's plan, a willingness to let her freedoms be shaped by a calling greater than her own preferences.

The application reaches every believer. There are appetites and freedoms that are not wrong in themselves, yet the Lord may call us to set them aside for the sake of being wholly His, for the good of others, or for the sake of a purpose He is working out through us. Paul speaks of being willing to forgo lawful things for the sake of the gospel and the conscience of others (1 Corinthians 8:13; 1 Corinthians 9:12). Mature discipleship is not only about avoiding the sinful but about gladly surrendering even the permissible when love and consecration call for it.

Samson's mother teaches us that consecration is costly and concrete. It touches the table, the appetite, the daily ordinary choices. To be set apart to God is not an abstraction; it shows up in what we are willing to lay down.

### Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Consecration often calls us to surrender things that are lawful in themselves for the sake of a higher purpose (1 Corinthians 8:13; 9:12).
- Samson's mother shared his consecration, modeling self-denial as partnership with God's purpose.
- Mature discipleship is not only avoiding the sinful but gladly laying down the permissible when love and devotion require it.

- Our freedoms are real, but they are to be governed by consecration to God and love for others, not by mere appetite.
- Concrete self-denial in daily, ordinary choices is part of what it means to be set apart to God.

### Discussion Prompts

- What lawful appetite or freedom might the Lord be asking you to surrender for the sake of being wholly His?
- How does Samson's mother model a consecration that is concrete and costly rather than abstract?
- When is it right to lay down a permissible freedom, and how do you discern that?

### Question 7

#### Student Question:

*When Manoah asks the messenger his name, the answer is that it is "secret," or wonderful (13:18), and the angel ascends in the flame of the altar (13:20). What does this reverent mystery teach us about who was truly appearing to Manoah, and how should an encounter with the holy God shape the way we approach Him?*

#### Commentary and Teaching Notes

When Manoah asks the messenger his name, the reply is arresting: "Why askest thou thus after my name, seeing it is secret?" The Hebrew word rendered "secret" is closely related to the word "wonderful," the very term Isaiah would later use of the coming Messiah, Wonderful, Counsellor (Isaiah 9:6). The name is beyond Manoah's grasp; it belongs to a realm of wonder.

Then, as Manoah and his wife offer a sacrifice, the angel does an astonishing thing: he ascends in the flame of the altar toward heaven, and they fall on their faces (13:20). The text has been calling this figure "the angel of the LORD," but the chapter increasingly identifies him with the LORD Himself. Manoah concludes, "We have seen God" (13:22), and the narrator does not correct him. This is what scholars call a theophany, an appearance of God in visible form.

Many believe such appearances of the angel of the LORD, who speaks as God, receives worship, and is identified with God yet distinct, are pre-incarnate manifestations of the Son. Whether or not one presses that identification, the chapter clearly intends us to understand that Manoah and his wife stood in the presence of the holy God Himself, and that this encounter was marked by wonder, fire, and ascent, fitting signs of the divine.

The reverent mystery here teaches us how to approach God. He is not a familiar equal to be handled casually but the holy One whose name is wonderful and whose presence is consuming fire (Hebrews 12:28–29). To draw near to Him, even in the freedom and confidence the gospel

gives us, is to draw near with reverence and godly fear. Familiarity must never curdle into flippancy. The God who came to Manoah is the God we worship still.

### **Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues**

- The angel's name is "wonderful" (13:18), linking this figure to the divine and anticipating the Messiah called Wonderful (Isaiah 9:6).
- The chapter presents a theophany; Manoah rightly concludes "We have seen God" (13:22), and the narrator affirms it.
- Many understand the angel of the LORD here as a pre-incarnate appearance of the Son, who speaks as God and is distinct from God, though the lesson should hold this with appropriate reverence rather than dogmatism.
- An encounter with the holy God calls for reverence and godly fear, not casual familiarity (Hebrews 12:28-29).
- The fire and ascent are fitting signs of the divine presence and of God's acceptance of the offering.
- Reverence and the gospel's confidence belong together; boldness to approach God never licenses flippancy toward Him.

### **Discussion Prompts**

- What does the "wonderful," secret name and the ascent in the flame reveal about who was appearing to Manoah?
- How should an encounter with the holy God shape the way we approach Him in worship and prayer?
- How do we hold together the confidence the gospel gives us and the reverence God's holiness demands?

### **Question 8**

#### **Student Question:**

*Manoah was gripped with fear that they would die for having seen God, while his wife reasoned calmly that the LORD would not have received their offering if He meant to kill them (13:22-23). When fear and faith pull against each other in you, which voice tends to win, and how can you grow in the steadying, reasoning faith she showed?*

#### **Commentary and Teaching Notes**

After the angel ascends in the flame, Manoah is overcome with terror: "We shall surely die, because we have seen God" (13:22). His fear is not irrational; it reflects the ancient and sober conviction that no one could see God and live (Exodus 33:20). Manoah's reaction shows a genuine, if panicked, sense of God's holiness.

It is his wife who steadies him, and her reasoning is a small masterpiece of practical faith: “If the LORD were pleased to kill us, he would not have received a burnt offering and a meat offering at our hands, neither would he have shewed us all these things, nor would as at this time have told us such things as these” (13:23). She does not dismiss the holiness that frightens her husband; she reasons from the evidence of God’s grace. He accepted their offering; He revealed His purpose; He gave them a promise. A God intent on destroying them would not have done these things.

This is faith reasoning rightly from what God has shown of Himself. She holds together reverence and trust, taking God’s holiness seriously while resting in His demonstrated grace. Fear and faith were both present in that house; in her, faith governed fear. In Manoah, fear nearly overwhelmed faith.

The question asks the student which voice tends to win in him. We all face moments when fear and faith pull against each other, in suffering, in uncertainty, in the awareness of our own sin. The path forward is the one she models: to reason from what God has actually shown us, supremely at the cross. The God who gave His Son for us, who received that offering and raised Him, has shown us beyond doubt that He does not mean to destroy those who come to Him in faith (Romans 8:31–32). Faith grows steady when it learns to reason from grace already given.

#### **Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues**

- Manoah’s fear reflects a real sense of God’s holiness (Exodus 33:20), which is not wrong in itself but needs to be balanced by trust.
- Manoah’s wife models a steadying, reasoning faith that argues from God’s demonstrated grace to confident trust (13:23).
- Mature faith holds reverence and trust together, neither presuming on God nor being paralyzed by fear.
- We grow in steadying faith by reasoning from what God has actually shown us, supremely at the cross (Romans 8:31–32).
- God’s acceptance of the offering was evidence of His gracious intent, just as Christ’s accepted sacrifice assures us of God’s favor toward those in Him.
- Faith is not the absence of fear but the governing of fear by trust in God’s revealed character.

#### **Discussion Prompts**

- When fear and faith pull against each other in you, which voice tends to win?
- How does Manoah’s wife reason from grace, and how can you learn to reason the same way from the cross?
- What has God already shown you of His character that should steady you in moments of fear?

#### **Question 9**

### **Student Question:**

*Trace the whole movement of this chapter: God acts before Israel asks, sets apart a deliverer from the womb, blesses the child, and stirs him by His Spirit (13:1-5, 24-25). What does this teach about God's sovereign and gracious initiative in salvation and about the meaning of being consecrated wholly to Him, and how does it call Christians today to be holy and set apart (1 Peter 1:15-16; Romans 12:1-2) without binding the Nazirite vow?*

### **Commentary and Teaching Notes**

Step back and trace the whole movement of this chapter, for it forms a single, coherent portrait of grace. God acts before Israel asks; into a generation that has stopped even crying out, He moves to raise up a deliverer (13:1-5). He sets that deliverer apart from the womb, consecrating Samson to Himself before the child can choose anything. He blesses the boy as he grows, and He stirs him by His Spirit (13:24-25). From beginning to end, the initiative is God's. This is the doctrinal heart of the lesson: salvation begins with the gracious initiative of God.

We must state this carefully so as not to slip into error in either direction. On one side, the chapter rebukes any idea that we earn God's favor or initiate our own rescue; grace comes first, freely, before we ask. On the other side, the chapter does not teach a fatalistic determinism in which human response does not matter. God's call is gracious and, in the fullness of the gospel, universal: He desires all to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:4; Titus 2:11). Samson must still live as a Nazirite; Israel must still turn; and we, under the gospel, must still respond in trusting, obedient faith. The Old Testament figures here are not models of some anachronistic New Testament rite; they are people who trusted and obeyed God in their day. God begins; we must respond.

The second great theme is consecration, being set apart wholly to God. Samson's Nazirite calling pictures a life that belongs entirely to the LORD, distinct from the world around it. This is where the chapter speaks most directly to Christians. We are not under the Nazirite law; we do not take up its razor and wine prohibitions as commands. The vow was a shadow. But the substance abides and deepens: Peter writes, "Be ye holy; for I am holy" (1 Peter 1:15-16), and Paul pleads that we present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, and be not conformed to this world but transformed by the renewing of the mind (Romans 12:1-2). Every Christian is called to be a consecrated person, set apart unto God in heart, appetite, speech, and life.

These two themes belong together and reach their fulfillment in Christ. God's gracious initiative, which raised up a flawed deliverer who could only begin to save Israel, runs forward to the perfect Deliverer who saves completely. Christ Himself was set apart and sanctified by the Father (John 10:36), consecrated wholly to the Father's will, and through Him we are sanctified, made holy, set apart (Hebrews 10:10, 14). The grace that came first in Zorah comes first still at the cross, and the consecration pictured in Samson becomes our calling and gift in Christ.

So the chapter calls Christians today to live as those God graciously claimed and set apart. Without binding the Nazirite vow, we take up its abiding principle: to be holy, distinct, wholly His, our appetites and freedoms ordered by our consecration to God and not by the pattern of the world. We did not initiate this; grace did. But having been claimed by such grace, we are summoned to present ourselves wholly to the One who first moved toward us. That is the heart of this lesson, and it is the heart of the gospel.

### **Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues**

- Salvation begins with God's gracious initiative; He moves toward us before we move toward Him (1 John 4:19; Romans 5:8), not as reward for merit.
- God's gracious initiative does not erase human responsibility; we must respond in trusting, obedient faith (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16), guarding against fatalism.
- The gospel call is universal and gracious, not a Calvinistic selection of some over others (1 Timothy 2:4; Titus 2:11; Mark 16:15–16).
- Old Testament figures like Manoah's family responded with trusting, obedient faith in their day; do not read New Testament baptism anachronistically back into the text.
- Consecration means being set apart wholly to God; all Christians are called to be holy (1 Peter 1:15–16) and to present themselves as living sacrifices (Romans 12:1–2).
- The Nazirite vow is old-covenant shadow and is NOT binding on Christians; carry forward its principle of holiness, not its specific practices.
- Both grace and consecration are fulfilled in Christ, who was set apart by the Father and through whom we are sanctified (John 10:36; Hebrews 10:10, 14).

### **Discussion Prompts**

- How does the whole movement of this chapter display God's gracious initiative in salvation, and how is that fulfilled in Christ?
- What does it mean to be consecrated, set apart wholly to God, and how do we live that out without binding the Nazirite vow?
- How do we hold together God's gracious first move and our responsibility to respond in trusting, obedient faith?

### **Question 10**

#### **Student Question:**

*The chapter ends with a quiet word of hope: "and the child grew, and the LORD blessed him: and the Spirit of the LORD began to move him at times" (13:24–25). Name one specific way you sense the Lord Jesus setting you apart for Himself through this passage, and what is the next concrete step of obedience He is stirring you toward?*

### **Commentary and Teaching Notes**

The chapter ends not with Samson's exploits but with a quiet, hopeful word: "And the woman bare a son, and called his name Samson: and the child grew, and the LORD blessed him. And the Spirit of the LORD began to move him at times" (13:24–25). Before any battle, before any failure, there is simply a child growing, blessed by God, beginning to be stirred by the Spirit. The deliverer's story starts in quiet growth and gentle stirring.

This is a fitting place for the student to land. The capstone question is personal and concrete: name one specific way you sense the Lord Jesus setting you apart for Himself through this passage, and what next step of obedience He is stirring you toward. The aim is not a vague resolution but a particular, nameable response, the kind that takes root in actual habits and choices.

Notice the word "began." The Spirit began to move Samson, and growth into consecration is likewise a beginning that continues. None of us arrives at holiness all at once. We are, like Samson at the chapter's close, people in whom God has begun a good work, and He who began it is faithful to continue it (Philippians 1:6). The stirring of the Spirit invites our cooperation, our willingness to grow, to be set apart further, to take the next step.

Let the student leave with one concrete step: an appetite to surrender, a habit to consecrate, a freedom to lay down, a discipline to take up, a way of being distinct from the world to embrace. The God who came first to Zorah, who blesses and stirs and sets apart, is at work in the student now, and the right response is not admiration of an old story but a will bent toward holiness and a heart stirred by the Spirit of the Lord.

### **Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues**

- Spiritual formation is concrete; the student should name a specific way Jesus is setting him apart and a specific next step of obedience.
- Consecration is a process that God begins and faithfully continues (Philippians 1:6); growth in holiness happens over time, not all at once.
- The Spirit's stirring invites our active cooperation, our willingness to grow and be set apart further.
- The goal of the study is transformation, not mere admiration of an old story (Romans 15:4; James 1:22).
- Being set apart for Christ touches real habits, appetites, freedoms, and disciplines in daily life.

### **Discussion Prompts**

- Name one specific way you sense the Lord setting you apart for Himself through this passage.
- What concrete next step of obedience is the Spirit stirring you toward?
- How will you cooperate with God's ongoing work of making you holy in the days ahead?