

Judges Chapter 13

The account of Sampson will take 4 chapters and two weeks to cover.

After king Asa had been a great victory over the Ethiopians; the prophet spoke:

2 Chronicles 15:2 “And he went out to meet Asa, and said unto him, hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin; the Lord is with you, while ye be with Him; and if ye seek Him, He will be found of you; but if ye forsake Him, He will forsake you.”

- Samson is usually associated with his great strength and the mighty things he did; but the real story is one of weakness.
- He had a weakness for women and was willing to disobey God to get what he wanted.
- He disobeyed his parents, he was deceitful, he fraternized with the enemies of God.
- He had an angry temper and a cruel streak.
- His weakness for women eventually led to his demise at the hands of a harlot.
- He broke all his vows to God.

Samson was unpredictable and undependable because he was double minded:

James 1:8 “A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.”

- It has been said that he fought the Lord's battles by day, and disobeyed the Lord's commandments by night.
- Sadly he is the picture of a compromised Christian, having been empowered by the Spirit of God, yet we see him yielding his body to the appetites of the flesh, and having played with sin he dies under the ruins of a heathen temple.

V: 1 Sadly this is the 7th time we read this statement.

- God delivered them into the hands of the Philistines for 40 years, the longest period of subjugation and suffering.
- Looking at the symbolism of different numbers in the Bible, 40 is the number of judgment and testing.
 1. Genesis: Rained for 40 day and 40 nights.
 2. Moses was 40 years old when he was exiled from Egypt, then he was 40 years in the desert learning to be a shepherd, then 40 years leading the nation of Israel.
 3. The children of Israel wandered in the wilderness for 40 years due to their rebellion and lack of faith.
- The Philistines were a strong sea faring people from the Island of Crete, they settled in the Southern Coastal region of Israel. They dominated the region in part because they had learned to forge weapons of steel – a technology that no one else in the area had at that time.

V: 2 Manoah = "Rest"

- The most important thing a woman could do in that culture was to bare children. If she couldn't bear children she was considered cursed by God; and it was grounds for divorce. For a woman not to bear children was seen as a reproach, there was a stigma attached to it.

Psalm 127:3 "Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is His reward."

- God often times used the withholding of children from a woman to prepare the way for a special child, a way of identifying if you will when God would make it obvious that His hand was upon a child.
 1. God kept **Sarah** from having children until she was in her 90's so that He could highlight that His hand would be upon **Isaac**.
 2. **Hannah** would be barren until the birth of the great prophet **Samuel**.
 3. In the NT we have **Elizabeth** and **John the Baptist**.
 4. Here God calls attention to the birth of Sampson by holding that event back until it is recognized as being ordained by God for His purposes.

V: 3-5 The angel announces that she shall no longer be barren, but shall bear a son who is called to be a "Nazarite unto God".

- The angel emphasizes the impact of pre-natal care: Not allowed to consume wine, strong drink, or anything from the vine – and nothing unclean because these will all have an impact upon the un-born child.
- God already has a future and a purpose planned out for this child.
- "**Nazar**" the root word for Nazarite means "**separated one**".
- Nazarites were men who had taken a vow, according to Numbers Ch. 6 to be separated from the world in order to be fully consecrated to God for a given period of time.
- Samson would be different only in that he would be thus consecrated from the womb to the grave.

The elements of the Nazarite vow:

1. No wine, strong drink, or anything from the vine meaning grapes.
 2. Not to eat anything that is unclean.
 3. No razor to come upon his head.
1. Wine represented earthly joy.

Nehemiah 8:10 "... for the joy of the Lord is your strength."

Paul:

Ephesians 5:18 "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit."

2. Not eating anything unclean: death and decay - the result of sin.

Romans 6:23 "For the wages of sin is death..."

2 Corinthians 6:17 "Come out from among them. Touch not the unclean things and I will receive you."

3. Letting the hair grow: an identifiable outward sign to the world of his consecration.

- Similar to Baptism: an outward expression of an inward faith, a distinguishing characteristic.

Or simply walking in love:

John 13:35 "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another."

- His purpose: He shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines; but he never actually does:

Judges 15:20 "And he judged Israel in the days of the Philistines twenty years."

- He "judged" Israel during the oppression of the Philistines, he never actually delivered his nation.

V: 6-7 Manoah's wife comes to him and explains the instruction from the angel, that they are about to have a son who is to be a Nazarite from the womb until the day of his death.

V: 8-14 Manoah heard his wife out and didn't doubt – "*the child that shall be born*" is a statement of faith, but he does seek confirmation, he wants to hear from God personally. V: 8 "... **oh my, lord.**"

- Women are often more intuitive than men, more sensitive to spiritual things – which can be a real asset and help.
- Part of spiritual leadership is hearing from God, being the initiator as opposed to being led by our wives.
- It is important to note that as Manoah entreated God regarding these things, the Lord hearkened unto him and affirmed what was previously said.

Isaiah 30:21 “And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, this is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.”

- This husband and wife are working and praying together and in this time of apostasy, still seeking God's face; when the angel again appears to her and she runs to tell her husband who responds.
- He asks a good question: How shall we order the child's life and what do you want us to do with him.

Proverbs 22:6 “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.”

- The most important part of a parent's instruction to a child is not the words but the example: it will either validate or nullify the instruction.
- Samson's Nazarite vow wasn't something that he took upon himself, it was something that God gave to him – much like a calling.
- This was all something that Manoah and his wife would have to teach their son, why wouldn't he eat grapes? Why didn't he ever get a hair cut? Raising and training Samson for the work of God.

V: 15-21 The eastern expression of hospitality, a meal for the visitor.

- The angelic messenger declined to partake, instead instructing that any burnt offering should be directed to the Lord.
- This is evidence that this is an angelic messenger only as opposed to a Theophony or Christophony.
- The angel then ascends back up to heaven in the smoke and flames of the offering.

V: 22-23 Manoah is concerned because he knows that no man can see God and live.

- He hasn't seen God, “just” and angel of God.
- His wife comforts him with practical advice, God wouldn't reveal Himself just to kill you + His word needs to be fulfilled.

V: 24-25 God's Word is fulfilled and she bares a son.

- Samson = “Shining as the sun” – Either their desire that he would be a light for Israel or secular Jews worshipping the sun god.
- God's blessing was upon him.
- The Spirit of God began to guide him – at times.

- Samson was probably a very average looking man – otherwise the secret of his strength would have been obvious – the Philistines were confused by what they saw.
- The secret of his strength wasn't the length of his hair, it was the Spirit of God working in him. His hair and the other things merely reflected his commitment to the Lord.

Samson was also distinct from the other judges of Israel in that he was a loner, always acting alone as opposed to rallying other men to join the cause of delivering Israel

Judges Chapter 14

V: 1-4 Samson went “down” he took the low road, now he is looking at, checking out / lusting after Philistine women.

- He knows that he shouldn't even go there:

2 Corinthians 6:14 “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness?”

- The children of Israel had been warned multiple times:

Deuteronomy 7:3-4 ³Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. ⁴For they will turn away thy son from following Me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly.

- Samson's first recorded words are telling:
- Samson's parents try to dissuade him, but he shows himself disrespectful and insolent towards them.
- But God allowed all of this for his purposes, part of His plan of deliverance, not approving of his behavior.

Romans 8:28 “All things work together for good to them that love God...”

Genesis 50:20 “What you meant for evil, God meant for good...”

V: 5-7 What is a man who's taken the Nazarite vow doing going to the vineyard?

1 Peter 5:8 “Be sober, be vigilant, for your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.”

- The “Spirit of the Lord” came mightily upon him – and he tore the lion up, killing it with his bare hands.
- In those days marriage was by arrangement, Samson was going with his parents to negotiate for the girl that pleased him and arrange for his wedding.
- There will always be those who argue that you can’t help who you fall in love with – which is absolutely not true!
- Love isn’t just some mushy irrational emotion or feeling; love is a commitment, and love is a choice – which is why God “commands” us to love!

Deuteronomy 11:13 “And it shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently unto My commandments which I command you this day, to love the Lord your God, and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul.”

John 15:17 “These things I command you, that ye love one another.”

- If he had steered clear of the vineyards where he had no business being, he wouldn’t have seen the girl in the first place.

V: 8-9 Returning at the appointed time to retrieve his wife he went to examine the carcass of the lion he’d killed.

1 Peter 5:8 “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.”

- This is strike two – going to a dead body, (lion is unclean animal) taking honey from the midst of the dead animal and eating it – eating that which was unclean.
- Giving some to his parents but not telling them where it came from – defiling them in the process.
- Samson should have been going to the Philistines to make war, not to make a marriage – so God would use it to make the war.

V: 10-20 At the wedding feast, which lasted 7 days it was customary to give the guests gifts, but not being prepared to do so Samson wagered against them, double or nothing.

- The riddle was based on his experience with the lion – which no one would have figured a good Jewish kid would have done.
- It sounds like he’s calling his wife a cow – but heifers weren’t used to plow fields – he’s saying you wouldn’t have know the secret if you hadn’t broken the rules.

- Having lost the bet due to his wife's disloyalty, he kills 30 other Philistines and gives their clothes to the men to whom he'd lost the wager.
- Samson was angry and went back to his father's house, he didn't complete the marriage and his wife is given to another man.
- This in turn leads to his killing 1,000 Philistines and burning their crops – all the stuff that wars are made of.