

SAMSON

Key Passages: Judges 13-16; Numbers 6:2-6 Heb 11:32;

Soon after the deliverance of Israel into the promised land they entered into a cycle of **REST** – served God, peaceful, **REBELLION** – A new generation is born (each generation must choose to follow God), **RETRIBUTION** – God withdraws his hand of protection and blessing, **REPENTANCE** – repents of sins, cry out to God for help, **RESTORATION** – bring Israel back. God raised up leaders for them, called Judges. This month we will study one of those judges.... Samson..

Judg 13:2-5 “Now there was a certain man from Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose name was Manoah; and his wife was barren and had no children. [3] And the Angel of the LORD appeared to the woman and said to her, “Indeed now, you are barren and have borne no children, but you shall conceive and bear a son. [4]Now therefore, please be careful not to drink wine or similar drink, and not to eat anything unclean. [5] For behold, you shall conceive and bear a son. And no razor shall come upon his head, for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb; and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines.”

We can tell by the phrase “Angel of the Lord” that this is another Christophany (a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus). The woman is told that she will become pregnant and bear a son. But this son will be a Nazirite from the moment he is born. A Nazirite was a person who took a vow of separation for service to God. The word “Nazirite” comes from the Hebrew verb “Nazar” which means, “to separate, to cut off.” The book of Numbers chapter 6 describes all of the duties and requirements for a Nazirite. But basically, it is a voluntary vow and there are 3 major restrictions. 1) He could not touch a dead body of any kind. 2) He was not allowed to drink wine or strong drink, or even to have any contact with the fruit of the vine. 3) He was to let his hair grow long.

Judg 13:24-25 So the woman bore a son and called his name Samson; and the child grew, and the LORD blessed him. [25] And the Spirit of the LORD began to move upon him

As we saw with Joshua, God is preparing Samson for the tasks that lay ahead.

Samson grows up and he spots a Philistine woman in the town of Timnah. He falls for her and tells his parents to get her because he wants to marry her. . On the way down to Timnah, Samson encounters a lion.

Judg 14:6 And the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him, and he tore the lion apart as one would have torn apart a young goat, though he had nothing in his hand. But he did not tell his father or his mother what he had done.

The Holy Spirit "came upon" Samson. This is the same "epi" experience described in the New Testament. With Joshua we saw an "indwelling" of God's Holy Spirit, here we see a "baptism" of the Holy Spirit. We normally don't think of indwelling and baptism of the Holy Spirit happening in the Old Testament, but here we have it.

So they go to Timnah, and Samson marries this woman. There are 30 Philistine men in attendance and Samson tells them a riddle and bets them that then can't come up with an answer within 7 days. Wedding feasts lasted 7 days. On the 4th day the men still couldn't solve the riddle so they threaten Samson's wife to get the answer to the riddle.

Judg 14:9 Then Samson's wife wept on him, and said, "You only hate me! You do not love me! You have posed a riddle to the sons of my people, but you have not explained it to me."

So rather than tell Samson of the threat, she chooses to betray him. She over hypes the situation by making it an issue if his love for her. She nags him for the remainder of the 7 days and finally he tells her the answer. Samson should've known that something was up when his wife spends their wedding feast days hounding him for the answer.

The men then answer Samson’s riddle... and he knows that it was his wife who had betrayed him.

Judg 14:19 Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon him mightily, and he went down to Ashkelon and killed thirty of their men, took their apparel, and gave the changes of clothing to those who had explained the riddle. So his anger was aroused, and he went back up to his father’s house.

We see again the Holy Spirit coming upon Samson. Ashkelon is another Philistine town, about 24 miles from Timnah. By killing those men, he broke one of his Nazirite vows. (It is commonly believed that he broke his Nazirite vow to abstain from wine during his wedding feast)

Samson goes back to his parents. But after a while, he goes back to visit his wife only to find that his father-in-law thought that Samson didn’t want her anymore so he gave her to the guy who was Samson’s best man at the wedding. There’s then a bunch of back-n-forth acts of revenge.

The Philistines who ruled over the Israelites forced the men of Judah to capture Samson and deliver him over. We see in Judg 15:14 yet another example of God’s Holy Spirit coming upon Samson to give him superhuman strength. He killed his captors and was free.

Judg 15:20-16:1 And he judged Israel twenty years in the days of the Philistines. Now Samson went to Gaza and saw a harlot there, and went in to her.

We can see that he became the leader of Israel for 20 years when he ran across another woman who would not be good for him. The citizens of Gaza discovered that he was with her and planned to kill him, but Samson escaped. He then ran into another woman.

Judg 16:4 Afterward it happened that he loved a woman in the Valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah.

The leaders of the Philistines went to Delilah and bribed her to find out the source of Samson’s strength. Delilah proceeds to ask Samson to reveal the source of his

strength and how he can be bound. He told her that it was fresh bowstrings would bind him. So while he is asleep, she binds him with bowstrings, but when he awakes, he easily breaks them. When she found out he lied, she asked him again... he told her another lie, but she tried it again. She asked a 3rd time, and again he told her a lie, and she tested it.

Judg 16:15 Then she said to him, "How can you say, 'I love you,' when your heart is not with me? You have mocked me these three times, and have not told me where your great strength lies."

Boy, this sounds familiar. Samson refuses, but she hounds him until he finally gives in and tells her.

Judg 16:17 "No razor has ever come upon my head, for I have been a Nazirite to God from my mother's womb. If I am shaven, then my strength will leave me, and I shall become weak, and be like any other man."

Sure enough, as soon as Samon is asleep, Delilah cuts his hair , he wakes up and is captured by the Philistines... who proceed to put his eyes out, blinding him. Then it happens that while the Philistines are sacrificing to their god Dagon. It was a big deal with over 3000 Philistine men and women in the temple. Samson is chained between two huge support pillars in the temple.

Judg 16:28 Then Samson called to the LORD, saying, "O Lord GOD, remember me, I pray! Strengthen me, I pray, just this once, O God, that I may with one blow take vengeance on the Philistines for my two eyes!"

Then Samson braces himself between the pillars, pushes with all his might... knocking down the pillars which in turn collapse the temple killing everyone inside.

Judg 16:31 And his brothers and all his father's household came down and took him, and brought him up and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the tomb of his father Manoah.

Key Character Traits:

- **Unfaithful**
He arguably broke all of his Nazirite vows.
- **Foolish**
He didn't learn anything from his past experiences. All of the women in his life deceived him. He didn't become more discerning in his choice of women, nor was he able to recognize what Delilah's plan was..
- **Selfish**
He was consumed with his desire for female companionship. So much so that he strayed from his Nazirite vows and his position as a judge of Israel.
- **Short Tempered**
He constantly flew off the handle and had extreme emotion reaction to situations.

MEANING OF HIS NAME

His name means, "like the sun" and "his ministry". Quite appropriate considering his fiery temper.

EXPERIENCE

- **He was born into the Nazirite vow.**
Judges 13:5
- **He married a Philistine woman**
Judges 14:10-20
- **The Holy Spirit came upon him**
Judges 14:6, 14:19, 15:14

- **He was the judge of Israel for 20 years**

Judges 15:20

SPIRITUAL LIFE

The only thing recorded about Samson's spiritual life is that he was chosen by God to be a judge of Israel. We also know that time and time again, God's Holy Spirit came upon Samson in his time of need.

SHORTCOMINGS

Samson had many shortcomings. He didn't learn from his previous experiences with the women in his life. (This resulted in his breaking one of his Nazirite vows) His short temper resulted in him killing thousands of Philistines (and breaking another one of his Nazirite vows).

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

He was the judge (leader) of Israel for 20 years. His fierceness and reputation kept the Philistines under control.

GLORY TO GOD

God demonstrated tremendous patience in dealing with Samson. In spite of Samson's shortcomings, God was faithful and empowered him when he needed it.

ESSENTIAL TRUTH

If we flirt with temptation long enough, we will eventually succumb to it. Time and time again, Samson played along with the deceptions of the women in his life. Rather than stand up to them, he indulged them, and in a final moment of weakness, he caved in. He had to know that there were destructive reasons behind the questions being asked. But, either because of a lack of diligence to think about the situation or pride in believing that he would prevail, he played a dangerous game of cat-and-mouse.

If we place a higher priority on relationships rather than God's will, our relationships will fail. It seems like Samson simply picked out women who visually appealed to him without thinking about the potential consequences. He entered into those relationships for worldly reasons...not for spiritual ones. Rather than get together with women who had a common spiritual base, he chose those who he found physically attractive. Even his parents asked him about his choice of a Philistine woman.
(Judges 14:3)

It is never too late, nor is our situation too drastic to call upon the Lord for help. Throughout his life Samson would drift away from the Lord, and yet God's Holy Spirit came upon him when he needed it. Even at the very end, the Lord answered Samson's prayer.

LIFE APPLICATION

We need to avoid sin as well as the appearance of sin. We don't want to "walk the line" on the edge of sin. Because sooner or later we'll cross that line. Some may look to 1 Cor 10:13 as a "guarantee" that we won't succumb to temptation but that only holds true ***if we are abiding in Christ!*** If we deliberately seek that line, then we aren't abiding in Christ. See (1 Cor 6:18, 1 Cor 10:14, 1 Tim 6:11, 2 Tim 2:22, James 4:7)

Seek the Lord and His Will first, and companionship will follow. All too often we look at our circumstances and wonder why the Lord hasn't given us someone for companionship. We've seen in previous character studies that God prepares those who seek His will for their lives. Consider Mat 6:33, "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you." The Lord loves us and He wants us to keep the main thing the main thing... and that is Jesus. If we keep the focus of our lives on Him, then we will be given the companionship that we seek... first and foremost with the Lord Himself, and secondly with a mate or selflessly and lovingly serving others.

I've had a few people tell me that being single is the worst thing in life. I've been single myself, and I can tell you that there are **worse** things than being single. Being yoked with someone who doesn't know Jesus is worse than being alone. But the absolute **worst** thing in life is not having Jesus.

When my previous marriage ended, I lost everything.... Including everything that I took pride in. Having lost all that I had, there was only one thing that I wanted. Just one. That was Jesus. Growing up a Catholic, I didn't know that it was possible to have a personal relationship with Jesus.

If I could have that, then I would be happy. Well, I got the bonus plan... because not only was I able to have that relationship with Him, but I **got** the message that it is all about **Him**... and once I did, He quickly lifted me up, and dumped a truckload of blessings on me. When we learn the lesson we're supposed to, the Lord won't leave us languishing, He works quickly to restore us and get us moving on what He has in store for us.

Not matter how bad our situation is... SEEK THE LORD!!! Again, seek the Lord. Consider Mat 28:20, "...and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." He is faithful! (as well as, 1Cor 1:9, 1 Th 5:24, 2 Th 3:3, Heb 2:17, 1Pe 4:19, 1Jo 1:9) 1 John 1:9 sums it all up, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

LEADING LESSON - *What do you think is the leading lesson of this man's life?*

IMPACT ON YOUR LIFE - *How does the leading lesson impact your life? What specific changes do you need to make to become a person of like character?*

FUTURE PLANS - *What specific action do you plan to take to grow in the proper character traits?*

EXPRESS OBEDIENCE - *Pray to God your desire to be obedient in this area of your life*