

Samson

In the book called Judges we find a very sad story concerning the people of Israel. It tells us of a time of unbelief and disobedience by the nation as a whole and by each individual person of the nation. Israel basically operated this statement. *"In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes."* [Judges 21:25](#).

[Judges 1:1](#).

"I Now after the death of Joshua it came to pass, that the children of Israel asked the LORD."

This verse seems to point to a God led nation but it actually began a drastic decline, ignoring God and depending on the nation leaders. At first they set out to conquest the Canaanite strongholds but they started to take their standards from the pagan nations, not obeying and trusting the Lords commands completely. As a result they had serious problems in driving the Canaanites out, instead they compromised, only partially obeying God's instructions, which therefore resulted in a co-existence with these pagan nations.

Eventually, this resulted in [Judges 3:7-8](#).

"7 And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and forgat the LORD their God, and served Baalim and the groves.

8 Therefore the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and he sold them into the hand of Chushanrishathaim king of Mesopotamia: and the children of Israel served Chushanrishathaim eight years."

A number of different leaders appear during the next few years who tried to make the people turn back to God. Most were able to follow and to obey God during their time alive, this included one well known one, [Gideon](#). Each of these leaders made the people turn back to the Lord for a while, the Spirit of God took possession of the specific leader, empowering each of them, but it still required the person to be obedient to the Lord's instructions and dependant upon the Lord. Unfortunately, the sinful nature of mankind's fleshly desires eventually seems to overrule the relationship with God. However, God would never give up on His people.

Samson is born.

The plans of God for His people now commence.

[Judges 13:1-5](#).

"1 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.

2 And there was a certain man of Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose name was Manoah; and his wife was barren, and bare not.

3 And the angel of the LORD appeared unto the woman, and said unto her, Behold now, thou art barren, and not: but thou shalt conceive, and bear a son.

4 Now therefore beware, I pray thee, and drink not wine nor strong drink, and eat not any unclean thing:

5 For, lo, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and no razor shall come on his head: for the child shall be a [Nazarite](#) unto God from the womb: and "

Samson was a unique person, created by God, for a unique time, he was a "Nazirite," set apart and dedicated by God for a specific purpose. However, Samson personally only saw his separation as a set of rules he had to obey, his heart did not seek God.

The power of God was upon Samson, but he misused it, often for his own needs and desires and not as God had wanted.

Samson at Timnah.

[Judges 14:1-4](#).

"1 And Samson went down to Timnah, and saw a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines.

2 And he came up, and told his father and his mother, and said, I have seen a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines: now therefore get her for me to wife.

3 Then his father and his mother said unto him, Is there never a woman among the daughters of thy brethren, or among all my people, that thou goest to take a wife of the uncircumcised Philistines? And Samson said unto his father, Get her for me; for she pleaseth me well.

4 But his father and his mother knew not that it was of the LORD, that he sought an occasion against the Philistines: for at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel. "

Samson wants to marry a Canaanite woman, which God has [forbidden](#) Deuteronomy 7:1-4.

Samson is controlled by his personal desires and still goes ahead, ignoring God. A move which breaks his "Nazarite" status, and therefore is a direct disobedience of God."

Samson's response to his parents objections, "Get her for me; for she pleaseth me well." shows the heart of the man.

Verse 4 is very important, God was using the human flesh desires of Samson to fulfill His plans. Note that God will control or use all that happens in the world as He wants, and to His glory.

Samson and the lion.

This event starts with a journey which involved a visit to a vineyard, drinking wine was against the [Nazarite](#) rules, though there is no record that Samson did drink any wine while there.

[Judges 15:5-9.](#)

"5 Then went Samson down, and his father and his mother, to Timnah, and came to the vineyards of Timnah: and, behold, a young lion roared against him.

6 And the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him, and he rent him as he would have rent a kid, and he had nothing in his hand: but he told not his father or his mother what he had done.

7 And he went down, and talked with the woman; and she pleased Samson well.

8 And after a time he returned to take her, and he turned aside to see the carcase of the lion: and, behold, there was a swarm of bees and honey in the carcase of the lion.

9 And he took thereof in his hands, and went on eating, and came to his father and mother, and he gave them, and they did eat: but he told not them that he had taken the honey out of the carcase of the lion."

Samson and parents travel to Timnah to arrange the wedding. God is now using the situation to carry out His plans, Samson is given the strength to kill the lion, but he tells no one.

On Samson's return for the wedding, as he passes the dead lion, he finds that the bees have created an hive in the dead body of the lion and it is full of honey. He takes some of the honey for himself and his parents, however, that means that he has had to touch a dead body, which is against the [Nazarite](#) vow rules.

Samson's Riddle.

Samson holds a customary feast as part of the wedding, that must have involved wine etc., a strange action by a true Nazirite.

[Judges 14:14:10-14.](#)

"10 So his father went down unto the woman: and Samson made there a feast; for so used the young men to do.

11 And it came to pass, when they saw him, that they brought thirty companions to be with him.

12 And Samson said unto them, I will now put forth a riddle unto you: if ye can certainly declare it me within the seven days of the feast, and find it out, then I will give you thirty sheets and thirty change of garments:

13 But if ye cannot declare it me, then shall ye give me thirty sheets and thirty change of garments. And they said unto him, Put forth thy riddle, that we may hear it.

14 And he said unto them, Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness. And they could not in three days expound the riddle. "

The Philistines cheat.

[Judges 14:15-18.](#)

"15 And it came to pass on the seventh day, that they said unto Samson's wife, Entice thy husband, that he may declare unto us the riddle, lest we burn thee and thy father's house with fire: have ye called us to take that we have? is it not so?

16 And Samson's wife wept before him, and said, Thou dost but hate me, and lovest me not: thou hast put forth a riddle unto the children of my people, and hast not told it me. And he said unto her, Behold, I have not told it my father nor my mother, and shall I tell it thee?

17 And she wept before him the seven days, while their feast lasted: and it came to pass on the seventh day, that he told her, because she lay sore upon him: and she told the riddle to the children of her people.

18 And the men of the city said unto him on the seventh day before the sun went down, What is sweeter than honey? and what is stronger than a lion? "

Samson honours the bet.

Again Samson sorts out his own answer to the situation, he is not guided by the Lord in his action but God is obviously involved, the power of God coming upon Samson shows how God is continuing to use the action of Samson to carry out His plans. Thirty Philistines are killed to get the clothes of the bet as part of the punishment of God.

"[Judges 14:18b-20.](#) 18b And he said unto them, If ye had not plowed with my heifer, ye had not found out my riddle.

19 And the Spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he went down to Ashkelon, and slew thirty men of them, and took their spoil, and gave change of garments unto them which expounded the riddle. And his anger was kindled, and he went up to his father's house.

20 But Samson's wife was given to his companion, whom he had used as his friend."

Samson Punishes the Philistines.

Samson goes back to his wife after a time and finds she has been married to someone else by her father. Samson is supposed to be serving and obeying God but now his action are about revenge, but God is still in control, punishment of the Philistines, as planned by God starts.

[Judges 15:1-6.](#)

"1 But it came to pass within a while after, in the time of wheat harvest, that Samson visited his wife with a kid; and he said, I will go in to my wife into the chamber. But her father would not suffer him to go in.

2 And her father said, I verily thought that thou hadst utterly hated her; therefore I gave her to thy companion: is not her younger sister fairer than she? take her, I pray thee, instead of her.

3 And Samson said concerning them, Now shall I be more blameless than the Philistines, though I do them a displeasure.

4 And Samson went and caught three hundred foxes, and took firebrands, and turned tail to tail, and put a firebrand in the midst between two tails.

5 And when he had set the brands on fire, he let them go into the standing corn of the Philistines, and burnt up both the shocks, and also the standing corn, with the vineyards and olives.

6 Then the Philistines said, Who hath done this? And they answered, Samson, the son in law of the Timnite, because he had taken his wife, and given her to his companion. And the Philistines came up, and burnt her and her father with fire.

7 And Samson said unto them, Though ye have done this, yet will I be avenged of you, and after that I will cease.

8 And he smote them hip and thigh with a great slaughter: and he went down and dwelt in the top of the rock Etam."

Samson has lost his Philistine wife, then, without seeking guidance from God, he takes revenge by destroying all their corn and vineyards with fire. The Philistines now take revenge upon the ex wife and her father.

Samson feels that the Philistines should not have done that to the father and ex wife, so feels he has the right to punish the Philistines and takes action, without the guidance of God, attacks and slaughters many. God's plan was to punish the Philistines, Samson recognized that you cannot compromise with any enemy, yet he did not seek the guidance of God in this matter, it was a personal battle, as were all of his battles, though God had called him to be Israel's deliverer, [Judges 13:5](#), all his actions were "Me first."

The Philistines hunt for Samson.

The following events show how bad the Israelites were, when the Philistines invaded Judah to capture Samson they found no resistance, they could have turned to support him, a specially strong man as their leader, but no, the Judeans offered to help and capture Samson. The Philistines actually ignored the Judeans, the Judeans spiritual lives were so dead and therefore of no danger to the Philistines.

Beware if we want a life of peace with the enemy, Satan.

But God is still in control and fulfills His plans.

[Judges 15:9-17.](#)

"9 Then the Philistines went up, and pitched in Judah, and spread themselves in Lehi.

10 And the men of Judah said, Why are ye come up against us? And they answered, To bind Samson are we come up, to do to him as he hath done to us.

11 Then three thousand men of Judah went to the top of the rock Etam, and said to Samson, Knowest thou not that the Philistines are rulers over us? what is this that thou hast done unto us? And he said unto them, As they did unto me, so have I done unto them.

12 And they said unto him, We are come down to bind thee, that we may deliver thee into the hand of the Philistines. And Samson said unto them, Swear unto me, that ye will not fall upon me yourselves.

13 And they spake unto him, saying, No; but we will bind thee fast, and deliver thee into their hand: but surely we will not kill thee. And they bound him with two new cords, and brought him up from the rock.

14 And when he came unto Lehi, the Philistines shouted against him: and the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him, and the cords that were upon his arms became as flax that was burnt with fire, and his bands loosed from off his hands.

15 And he found a new jawbone of an ass, and put forth his hand, and took it, and slew a thousand men therewith.

16 And Samson said, With the jawbone of an ass, heaps upon heaps, with the jaw of an ass have I slain a thousand men.

17 And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking, that he cast away the jawbone out of his hand, and called that place Ramathlehi."

The Plan of God was fulfilled, "the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon Samson, " and kills a thousand soldiers with just the jawbone of an ass. Many men with sword's against a bone, a man and the power of God.

Samson again thinks of "Me."

[Judges 15:18-20.](#)

"18 And he was sore athirst, and called on the LORD, and said, Thou hast given this great deliverance into the hand of thy servant: and now shall I die for thirst, and fall into the hand of the uncircumcised?

19 But God clave an hollow place that was in the jaw, and there came water there out; and when he had drunk, his spirit came again, and he revived: wherefore he called the name thereof Enhakkore, which is in Lehi unto this day.

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

We find Samson is exhausted following the battle with the Philistines, Samson now realizes his physical needs and he prays to God, admitting that it was the power of God that made it possible for his action against the soldiers, "I am your servant". But now Samson realized the danger he was in through his exhaustion, he could "*fall into the hand of the uncircumcised?*"

Samson's prayer very quickly turns into a complaint,

"now shall I die for thirst, "

Samson seems to have forgotten that it was his own action that put him into this situation, not because he was following the instructions from God, though God has used it to fulfill His plans.

Samson's physical needs are desperate, a drink of water, not a spiritual talk from God, and God provides the water miraculously through the jaw bone, putting water into the jawbone. We should always remember that a "Bible Study" is not always the answer to a person's problems.

Samson's next action is to name the location, yet he still does not think, his name for the place is

"Enhakkore," which has the meaning "Spring of the Caller," a reminder of the caller and not the supplier, God.

God now uses Samson who becomes a judge and to lead and guide the people for the next twenty years.

Samson at Gaza.

We continue the life story of Samson. He is still reacting to his physical desires, though he knows that he is breaking his Nazirite vow he goes to Gaza to satisfy his sexual desires. Samson did not fail the temptation because it was so strong, no he actually was seeking disobedience of God and sin.

Gaza is a strong hold for the Philistines so he is deliberately exposing himself to danger, he seems to feel that he is invincible, so full of self confidence, unfortunately living by "self," without God, was what would eventually be his downfall, then he meets Delilah.

[1 Corinthians 10:12,13.](#)

"12 Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

13 There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. "

[Judges 16:1-3](#)

"1 Then went Samson to Gaza, and saw there an harlot, and went in unto her.

2 And it was told the Gazites, saying, Samson is come hither. And they compassed him in, and laid wait for him all night in the gate of the city, and were quiet all the night, saying, In the morning, when it is day, we shall kill him.

3 And Samson lay till midnight, and arose at midnight, and took the doors of the gate of the city, and the two posts, and went away with them, bar and all, and put them upon his shoulders, and carried them up to the top of an hill that is before Hebron."

Samson falls under the spell of another evil woman, the Philistine enemy somehow know that he is in the city, but decide to wait until the morning to kill him, so they watch and wait.

Samson gets up at midnight, then as he leaves the town, we get an amazing show of his strength, he picks up the gates, their posts and cross bars, then carries them forty miles to Hebron.

Samson and Delilah.