

The Book of Judges
SAMSON, A TASK BEGUN BUT UNFORTUNATELY NEVER FINISHED
March 1, 2017

Session Seven

1
2
3 *As the morning light broke across the horizon, men began to stir all over the prison*
4 *compound. In a corner cell, heavily guarded and barricaded behind an enormous*
5 *iron door, another man heard the noises and woke with a start.*

6
7 *He had been dreaming of other, better days. Dreams of sunshine and blue sky, of*
8 *bright flowers and green trees, dreams of a life long gone. He had dreamt of*
9 *childhood days, of strong young men, of beautiful women. Dreaming of what had*
10 *been and of what might have been.*

11
12 *He awoke to the sound of harsh reality. From somewhere across the compound came*
13 *a muffled curse and then another one. He heard the sound of tired feet shuffling,*
14 *rusty iron gates opening and closing, the guards' slow methodical walk toward the*
15 *central guard tower. He groped in the darkness, reaching for his sandals. Finding*
16 *them, he put them on, wrapping the throngs around his ankles. Feeling carefully for*
17 *the wall, he stood up.*

18
19 *He looked awful. He was thinner now, prison food being what it was. His face was*
20 *covered with a stubbly growth of beard. His hair, what there was of it, was matted and*
21 *dirty.*

22
23 *Slowly now, he felt along the wall until he found the corner and then followed the wall*
24 *until he came to the door. He waited for someone to come.*

25
26 *When he felt the sun on his face, he reached up to rub the sleep out of his eyes. Only*
27 *he did not have any eyes.*

28
29 *For Samson, another day in prison had begun.*

30 RAY PRITCHARD / KEEP BELIEVING MINISTRIES

31
32 I doubt if any mortal man was ever born with more going for him than Samson. He had
33 it all. Then he blew it! Royally! What should have been Israel's great triumph became
34 instead Israel's humiliation.

35
36 Here is the setting - yet another cycle! Judges 13:1 **And the children of Israel did**
37 **evil again in the sight of the Lord; and the Lord delivered them into the hand of the**

1 **Philistines forty years.** Ah, the tyranny of those dreaded cycles.

2
3 This drama begins with a man named Manoah and his wife. She was barren and
4 apparently longed for a child. An angel of God appeared to her with the message:

5
6 **Judges 13:2-5 And there was a certain man of Zorah, of the family of the Danites,**
7 **whose name was Manoah; and his wife was barren, and bare not. [3] And the angel**
8 **of the Lord appeared unto the woman, and said unto her, Behold now, thou art**
9 **barren, and bearest not: but thou shalt conceive, and bear a son. [4] Now therefore**
10 **beware, I pray thee, and drink not wine nor strong drink, and eat not any unclean**
11 **thing: [5] For, lo, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and no razor shall come on his**
12 **head: for the child shall be a Nazarite unto God from the womb: and he shall begin**
13 **to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines.**

14 15 A NAZARITE

16
17 The angel made a delightful promise to this woman, but it came with stern stipulations.
18 She was to raise this child as a Nazarite.

19
20 The Nazarite vow was taken by individuals (or in Samson's case his mother made the
21 vow prior to his birth) to be dedicated to God. The Hebrew word *nazir* means "to be
22 separated or consecrated." The biblical base for this is Numbers 6:1-21.

23
24 Involved in the vow:

- 25 • No wine or strong drink...not even eat grapes
- 26 • Cannot cut their hair (head or beard)
- 27 • Could not touch a dead body

28
29 These Nazarites were to be committed totally to God. God gave Samson life for a
30 specific purpose - he was to be a deliverer of the Israelites from the forty-year domination
31 by the Philistines.

32
33 **Judges 13:24-25 And the woman bare a son, and called his name Samson: and the**
34 **child grew, and the Lord blessed him. [25] And the Spirit of the Lord began to move**
35 **him at times in the camp of Dan between Zorah and Eshtaol.**

36
37
38 "At times." Occasionally. Once in a while. When Paul wrote his last will and testament
39 to young Timothy, he admonished him to be consistent in his relationship to God. II
40 Timothy 4:2: "Be instant in season and out of season." Don't be "up and down" in

1 walk with the Lord. Develop a consistency of obedience and behavior to the Lord!
2 Despite occasional fantastic victories wrought through Samson, there also times of not
3 only wayward behavior but downright despicable.

4
5 One might think, upon first reading of this story, that Samson's strength was because of
6 his hair. Not so. *Samson's strength was not in his arms, although he killed a thousand*
7 *Philistines with those arms. His strength was not in his back, although he carried the*
8 *gates of Gaza on his back, which was a remarkable undertaking. And Samson's strength*
9 *was not in his hair, although he was weak when it was cut. His hair was just the badge,*
10 *the symbol, of his Nazarite vow. When he allowed his hair to be cut, he violated the vow*
11 *and "didn't even know the Spirit of God had left him." Judges 16:20*

12 **And she said, The Philistines be upon thee, Samson. And he awoke out of his sleep,**
13 **and said, I will go out as at other times before, and shake myself. And he wist not that**
14 **the Lord was departed from him.**

15
16 The fact that someone might be used in the work of God does not necessarily mean they
are walking with Him. Romans 11:29 **For the gifts and calling of God are without**
repentance. This is a pretty heavy subject, worthy of a lot of study. God may honor
His bestowed gifts of ministry even though the minister is not particularly worthy of

17 18 SAMSON'S "WOMEN PROBLEMS" BEGIN

19
20 It has been observed that every person has a weakness of some form or another. We are
21 not to judge each other, by Jesus' strong directive, because of other's weaknesses. Jesus
22 said, "You want to remove the speck from your brother's eye even while you have a 2 x 4
23 sticking out of your eye!" (Sermon on the Mount)

24
25 Samson's weakness was women. He really loved women. And that would bring about
26 his sad and fatal demise.

27
28 Judges 14:1-2 **And Samson went down to Timnath, and saw a woman in Timnath of**
29 **the daughters of the Philistines. [2] And he came up, and told his father and his**
30 **mother, and said, I have seen a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines:**
31 **now therefore get her for me to wife.**

32
33 Timnath was a quaint little town tucked in the lovely hills southwest of Jerusalem. It was
34 a Philistine town and Samson had no business being there, let alone become infatuated
35 with a Philistine woman.

1 Not only was Samson hesitant to ask for this woman's hand in marriage from her father,
2 he wanted his "mommy and daddy" to do that for him. I understand there was the
3 "business-arrangement" to deal with in those days, but still Samson wasn't man enough to
4 confront that woman's family himself apparently.

5
6 Needless to say, his parents were distressed that he would desire a Philistine woman (a
7 pagan) to be his wife: Judges 14:3-4 **Then his father and his mother said unto him,**
8 **Is there never a woman among the daughters of thy brethren, or among all my**
9 **people, that thou goest to take a wife of the uncircumcised Philistines? And Samson**
10 **said unto his father, Get her for me; for she pleaseth me well. [4] But his father and**
11 **his mother knew not that it was of the Lord, that he sought an occasion against the**
12 **Philistines: for at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel.**

13
14 Now some commentators cover for Samson here, surmising that he just wanted access to
15 the Philistines so he could destroy them somehow. Perhaps. But considering his
16 predilection for women, that may be "pushing" the truth a bit.

17
I could give you several pages here on the dangers of "unequal marriage," that is, a
follower of Jesus marrying a non-follower. As a pastor I have heard this so many
times: "Well, Pastor, when we get married, I can change him and bring him around to
the church and to Jesus." Well, I have yet to see it happen. Usually it is the other
way around. The non-believer usually brings down the believer.

18 THE ENCOUNTER WITH THE LION

19
20 Judges 14:5-9 **Then went Samson down, and his father and his mother, to Timnath,**
21 **and came to the vineyards of Timnath: and, behold, a young lion roared against him.**
22 **[6] And the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and he rent him as he would**
23 **have rent a kid, and he had nothing in his hand: but he told not his father or his**
24 **mother what he had done. [7] And he went down, and talked with the woman; and**
25 **she pleased Samson well.**

26 **[8] And after a time he returned to take her, and he turned aside to see the carcase**
27 **of the lion: and, behold, there was a swarm of bees and honey in the carcase of the**
28 **lion. [9] And he took thereof in his hands, and went on eating, and came to his father**
29 **and mother, and he gave them, and they did eat: but he told not them that he had**
30 **taken the honey out of the carcase of the lion.**

31
32 Now Samson begins to actively violate his Nazarite vow. How so?
33

1 1. He went to the vineyards of Timnath. That had to do with drinking and wine.
2 Nazarites were not only forbidden to drink fermented beverages but to even eat grapes.
3 And here is Samson - in a vineyard! If you have been around this church long, you know
4 how I feel about the booze business. In the Assemblies of God we practice teetotaling -
5 no drinking alcohol in any form. So - can we make an iron-clad case for that in scripture?
6 No. To compare today's society with biblical society and its mores is a foolish venture.
7 But long ago, in our fellowship we made an arbitrary decision that we would not embrace
8 in any form the consumption of alcohol. We have had to pick up the pieces of too many
9 families and individuals who succumbed to the bottle and whose lives were destroyed. I
10 find it interesting to note that our current President makes it clear he neither drinks nor
11 smokes. (Please don't consider that a political endorsement; it is only an observation.)
12

13 2. A Nazarite was never to touch a dead body. Having any contact with a carcass was a
14 violation of Samson's vow.
15

16 Sometime after killing the lion (similar to our panthers here in Florida), Samson returned
17 by the carcass and discovered a swam of bees and honey in it. He scooped the honey out
18 and ate it and gave some to his parents - but did not inform there where he got it.
19

20 This story plays a major part in the beginning of Samson's collapse.
21

22 **Judges 14:10-14 So his father went down unto the woman: and Samson made there**
23 **a feast; for so used the young men to do. [11] And it came to pass, when they saw**
24 **him, that they brought thirty companions to be with him. [12] And Samson said**
25 **unto them, I will now put forth a riddle unto you: if ye can certainly declare it me**
26 **within the seven days of the feast, and find it out, then I will give you thirty sheets**
27 **and thirty change of garments: [13] But if ye cannot declare it me, then shall ye give**
28 **me thirty sheets and thirty change of garments. And they said unto him, Put forth**
29 **thy riddle, that we may hear it. [14] And he said unto them, Out of the eater came**
30 **forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness. And they could not in three**
31 **days expound the riddle.**
32

33 Samson is now feeling "his oats" and decides to venture into yet another violation of his
34 vow - that of gambling. He proposed a riddle to his bachelor party guests. The stakes
35 were thirty garments and thirty cloaks. Without knowing the story of Samson's
36 conquest of the lion and the honey he found in it, there was no way those guests could
37 have solved the riddle.
38

39 At this point, the Philistines decide they have "had it" with this Samson guy and approach
40 his fiancé with a dastardly plan. Samson's love affair always proved deadly.

1 Judges 14:15-18 And it came to pass on the seventh day, that they said unto
2 Samson's wife, Entice thy husband, that he may declare unto us the riddle, lest we
3 burn thee and thy father's house with fire: have ye called us to take that we have? is
4 it not so? [16] And Samson's wife wept before him, and said, Thou dost but hate me,
5 and lovest me not: thou hast put forth a riddle unto the children of my people, and
6 hast not told it me. And he said unto her, Behold, I have not told it my father nor my
7 mother, and shall I tell it thee? [17] And she wept before him the seven days, while
8 their feast lasted: and it came to pass on the seventh day, that he told her, because
9 she lay sore upon him: and she told the riddle to the children of her people. [18] And
10 the men of the city said unto him on the seventh day before the sun went down, What
11 is sweeter than honey? and what is stronger than a lion? And he said unto them, If ye
12 had not plowed with my heifer, ye had not found out my riddle.
13

14 After seven days, the Philistines figured they were about to lose the bet. Apparently by
15 now, Samson had married this pagan girl for she is referred to as Samson's wife in verse
16 15 and he is referred to as her husband.
17

18 The Philistines threatened the woman of burning down her father's house and her in it if
19 she could not come up with the answer to that riddle. Now....here come the tears,
20 perhaps the most potent weapon against a man in the world! (?)
21

22 I was told of a woman who brought home a beautiful fur coat to show her husband.
"Yes," he said, "that is gorgeous but how much is it?" She replied, "Only \$10,000."
He answered, "My Darling, existing contingencies preclude such an excessive outlay of
current monies at this inopportune moment." She, not too bright, responded, "I don't get
it." Her husband said, "That's right."

23
24 Samson's wife wept for seven days, and finally he relented and told her the key to the
25 riddle (which she promptly reported to her Philistine friends). So Samson lost the wager.
26 He left in a huff and apparently left his new wife back with her friends. He snarled, "If
27 you had not plowed with my heifer, you would not have found out my riddle." That was
28 the epitome of sarcasm. Now Samson got really slapped:
29

30 Judges 14:20 But Samson's wife was given to his companion, whom he had used as
31 his friend. One scholar observed, "The father of the girl gave her to Samson's best man
32 at the wedding."
33

34 REPRISAL

35
36 Now Samson began a program of "getting even."

1 Judges 15:1-2 **But it came to pass within a while after, in the time of wheat harvest,**
2 **that Samson visited his wife with a kid; and he said, I will go in to my wife into the**
3 **chamber. But her father would not suffer him to go in. [2] And her father said, I**
4 **verily thought that thou hadst utterly hated her; therefore I gave her to thy**
5 **companion: is not her younger sister fairer than she? take her, I pray thee, instead of**
6 **her.**

7
8 Some time had gone by after the disastrous wedding and Samson's anger had subsided a
9 bit. He apparently did not know his wife had been given to his best friend. He brought
10 a young goat to her, hoping somehow it would assuage the situation. Instead, his former
11 wife's father told him he was out of luck; however, (and get this wicked line) he said,
12 "Your former wife's younger sister is a 'looker;' why not just take her?" Well, that "did
13 it" and now Samson went on a rampage.

14
15 Judges 15:3-5 **And Samson said concerning them, Now shall I be more blameless**
16 **than the Philistines, though I do them a displeasure. [4] And Samson went and**
17 **caught three hundred foxes, and took firebrands, and turned tail to tail, and put a**
18 **firebrand in the midst between two tails. [5] And when he had set the brands on fire,**
19 **he let them go into the standing corn of the Philistines, and burnt up both the shocks,**
20 **and also the standing corn, with the vineyards and olives.**

21
22 What a cruel thing for Samson to do! Where was PETA? He caught 300 foxes....tied
23 the tails of them together (two foxes together)....tied a torch to their tails and set them
24 loose in the fields. The animals would have taken off in a dead run. This, of course, set
25 all the crops on fire.

26
27 Now the war was on! Judges 15:6-8 **Then the Philistines said, Who hath done this?**
28 **And they answered, Samson, the son in law of the Timnite, because he had taken his**
29 **wife, and given her to his companion. And the Philistines came up, and burnt her and**
30 **her father with fire.**

31 **[7] And Samson said unto them, Though ye have done this, yet will I be avenged of**
32 **you, and after that I will cease. [8] And he smote them hip and thigh with a great**
33 **slaughter: and he went down and dwelt in the top of the rock Etam.**

34
35 The girl had sold out Samson regarding the riddle for fear of being killed by fire by her
36 own people. Now she is still assassinated, along with her father, burned to death by her
37 own people. The issue between Samson and the Philistines was no longer a divine
38 mission – it was personal revenge. The killings had begun.

THE SLAUGHTER

1 Judges 15:9-15 Then the Philistines went up, and pitched in Judah, and spread
2 themselves in Lehi. [10] And the men of Judah said, Why are ye come up against us?
3 And they answered, To bind Samson are we come up, to do to him as he hath done to
4 us. [11] Then three thousand men of Judah went to the top of the rock Etam, and
5 said to Samson, Knowest thou not that the Philistines are rulers over us? what is this
6 that thou hast done unto us? And he said unto them, As they did unto me, so have I
7 done unto them. [12] And they said unto him, We are come down to bind thee, that
8 we may deliver thee into the hand of the Philistines. And Samson said unto them,
9 Swear unto me, that ye will not fall upon me yourselves. [13] And they spake unto
10 him, saying, No; but we will bind thee fast, and deliver thee into their hand: but
11 surely we will not kill thee. And they bound him with two new cords, and brought
12 him up from the rock.

13 [14] And when he came unto Lehi, the Philistines shouted against him: and the
14 Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and the cords that were upon his arms
15 became as flax that was burnt with fire, and his bands loosed from off his hands. [15]
16 And he found a new jawbone of an ass, and put forth his hand, and took it, and slew
17 a thousand men therewith.

18
19 Samson used some of his own people, who were by now very frightened of what the
20 Philistines might do by way of reprisal. 3,000 of the Jewish men told their hero that the
21 Philistines were hot for revenge. So Samson said, "Tie me up and deliver me to them,
22 but don't harm me yourselves."

23
24 They agreed, tied Samson up, and delivered him into the hands of their enemy. Well, the
25 ropes were broken when God's strength infused him. He grabbed the jawbone of a dead
26 animal and killed 1,000 of the Philistines with it. No way he could have done that even
27 had he been Arnold Swarzenegger. The promised power of God filled him when he
28 most needed it. But it was a matter chapter 14, verse 25, "The Spirit of the Lord came
29 upon him AT TIMES...." This was one of those blessed times. Sadly, there was the
30 other side.

31
32 Judges 16:1-2 Then went Samson to Gaza, and saw there an harlot, and went in
33 unto her. [2] And it was told the Gazites, saying, Samson is come hither. And they
34 compassed him in, and laid wait for him all night in the gate of the city, and were
35 quiet all the night, saying, In the morning, when it is day, we shall kill him.

36
37 Here it is again: Samson's weakness – women.

38
39 Judges 16:3 And Samson lay till midnight, and arose at midnight, and took the
40 doors of the gate of the city, and the two posts, and went away with them, bar and all,

1 **and put them upon his shoulders, and carried them up to the top of an hill that is**
2 **before Hebron.**

3
4 God was not quite through with Samson. His weakness would become his fatality, but
5 that was yet to come. When Samson left the prostitute, he found the gates of Gaza
6 locked. With supernatural strength, he ripped the whole structure off the wall and carried
7 them to a hill (I am told that hill was quite a ways away from Gaza).

8

Yes, this is the Gaza so much in the news of late. Given by the Israeli government to those who call themselves Palestinians, Gaza has become a headquarters for terrorism. The military there has fired rockets indiscriminately into Israel for years. However, Israel is protected by the famed "Iron Dome" which routinely blows the rockets out of the sky.

9 The plot now will thicken as Samson encounters a woman called Delilah. We will take
10 up that story...next week.

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