

Judges 15

December 29, 2011

We've already seen Samson's Birth, Samson's Brawn, Samson's Bride and Samson's Bet. This evening we'll see:

Samson's Bride (part 2), Samson's Burns and Samson's Battles – all mixed together.

V. 1-2

It was the time of the wheat harvest, late May, early June, and Samson goes down to visit his bride, his wife, legally - to be with her sexually.

But there's a problem. If you remember the events of chapter 14, there was a massive drama at the wedding; Samson gambled, he lost the bet, cause the other side got it out of his bride, and so...Samson, in the end was very upset. Most teachers don't believe that Samson never consummated the marriage.

As a matter of fact, the last thing we read in 14:19, was that Samson was angry and went home to his father's house. He thought Samson thoroughly hated his daughter.

It's for that reason the father of the bride, gave his daughter to the best man.

He offered Samson his younger daughter, but this other girl had already caught Samson's eye; and we even read in 14:7, that this was the woman that pleased him.

V. 3-5

Samson said, "this time I have a right to get even" (NIV); "this time I am justified in doing the Philistines harm" (NET)

There's something wrong about that type of mentality...but he goes and catches 300 foxes, the same Hebrew word can also be translated Jackals (NET), and some say these probably are Jackals due to the fact that they travel in large groups, and would be easier to muster up.

But either way, Samson ties them together, 2 by 2, so that when they run, they would do so, frantically, and in the process he burns all the grain - the sheaves as well as the standing grain, and then the vineyards, and then the olive groves.

In the culture of the day that was a way of saying everything, the grain, the vineyards and the olive groves; Samson hit them hard.

He got his gal, Samson get's their grain;

And even though God so graciously used Samson, Samson's life is one of those lessons in what **NOT** to do.

He should never have fallen in love and married a non-believer, but then when he did marry her, it didn't give him the right to abandon her, the way he did.

You see, Samson didn't know how to meet a wife, or treat a wife; He didn't feed her or lead her, he left her physically, emotionally and Spiritually...it's no wonder he lost her.

And it's a lesson for us in the meeting and treating marriage relationship...for how many men have lost their wives...how many wives have lost their husbands...due to the Samson syndrome of selfishness.

Let's read this and heed this.

Some might read this and see that Samson won great victories for God, but when you read just bit between the lines you find that Samson won great victories for Samson.

In his heart, it was not for God's glory, it was for personal vengeance...and we're going to see, even to the very end, that's the way he died.

Be so careful; flee personal vengeance, remember Romans 12:19 "Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but *rather* give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord." (Deuteronomy 32:35)

And this can be one on one, family against family, gang against gang; tragically in the chronicles of history it's even been religion against religion; crazy; keep in mind, "Violence breeds violence."

Samson had a bad marriage, bad motives

It led to big battles back and forth

V. 6

Wow!

The Philistines had threatened earlier to burn this family: Judges 14:15 "But it came to pass on the seventh day that they said to Samson's wife, "Entice your husband, that he may explain the riddle to us, ***or else we will burn you and your father's house with fire.*** Have you invited us in order to take what is ours? *Is that not so?"*"

He burns their grain, they burn his gal;

V. 7-8

Samson says, "I won't stop, I won't rest, until I get my revenge on you." (NIV, NLT).

Samson, only began, to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines.

Henry Longfellow said, "Great is the art of beginning, but greater is the art of ending."

Samson did not finish the work God called him to.

Something that's very interesting, even fascinating to discover is that the Philistines were not really subdued until the reign of king David, and one of the contrasts between David and Samson is whose battle they fought.

Samson fought his own battles, for his own glory, for personal vengeance; while David fought the battles of the Lord.

Remember what Abigail said in 1 Samuel 25:28 "...the LORD will certainly make for my lord (David) an enduring house, because my lord (David) fights the battles of the LORD, and evil is not found in you throughout your days."

Even though Samson sins in motive, he wins the battle...but notice what we read next.

V. 9-13

The ways of the world, I don't get mad, I get even.

The Philistines say in v. 10, "...we have come up to arrest Samson, to do to him, as he had done to us."

Samson says, there in v. 11, "As they did to me, so I have done to them."

Now I understand this is Israel and the Philistines, and I understand this is war...but I think the Holy Spirit is saying more.

Cause when I read that, I see so clearly that the reasoning is wrong.

Especially as a Judge of Israel, a war must be more, for the glory of God. A fight...must be right...and sometimes the fight is right...and sometimes ***not*** fighting is wrong.

Case in point, here you have Israel, God's people, with a man who is so obviously God's appointed, God's anointed – gifted and lifted – and yet for the first time in this time period, the nation of Israel musters an army to arrest the one born to bring rest.

Their primary problem was that they were content to live below the standards of God, they wouldn't say no, to the status quo.

“Do you not know that the Philistines rule over us?”

It's so sad to see so frequently, people living as Spiritual paupers, when they've actually, spiritually rich.

You don't have to have the Philistines ruling over you – no emotion, no commotion, should control you – no thug, no drug, should have any power over you – you don't need a drink, you don't need a shrink.

No – your deliverer is ready to deliver you, right here, right no, just let Him lead!

Don't be like Israel – they arrested the anointed one, and gave him over to the enemy.

V. 14-17

With a jawbone of a donkey, Samson slew 1,000 men.

How?

2 things come to mind:

1. God's Grace (1 Corinthians 15:10; 2 Timothy 2:2)

(Samson had broken his Nazirite vow) (even here)

2. God's Spirit

We've seen the Spirit work in such a way - repeatedly in the time of the Judges: 3:10; 6:34; 11:29; (Samson 13:25; 14:6, 19; 15:14)

Why the jawbone of a donkey? So that we would know it was the Lord, it was by His Spirit.

Yesterday, I was reading in my devotional reading a place that might be good to turn to (Zechariah 4).

Samson kills a thousand!

But they shouldn't have been surprised, this was the promised potential for the nation of Israel: Moses: Leviticus 26:8 “Five of you shall chase a hundred, and a hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight; your enemies shall fall by the sword before you.”

Joshua 23:10 ""One man of you shall chase a thousand, for the LORD your God *is* He who fights for you, as He promised you."

We saw something similar back in Judges 3:31 "After him was Shamgar the son of Anath, who killed six hundred men of the Philistines with an ox goad; and he also delivered Israel."

Samson experienced this as well, but in closing we see, just in case Samson starts to think it's him, it's he, it's me – He man!

V. 18-20

Why would God give Samson such a great victory in war, and yet deprive him of water?

Why would God spare his life so miraculously, but then immediately bring him the verge of death?

I would suggest a couple of things in closing:

1. Without Me you're history
2. Without Me you're thirsty

O, you might not see that superficially, but I think when you read it prayerfully, God is reaching out to Samson – you can't survive apart from Me: Daniel 5:23 ""And you have lifted yourself up against the Lord of heaven. They have brought the vessels of His house before you, and you and your lords, your wives and your concubines, have drunk wine from them. And you have praised the gods of silver and gold, bronze and iron, wood and stone, which do not see or hear or know; and the God who *holds* your breath in His hand and owns all your ways, you have not glorified."

Just as Samson needed water to survive physically, he needed that living water to survive Spiritually...without Me, You're history, and without Me, You're thirsty.

This water is what your soul longs for:

Psalms 42:2 "My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.

This water is free:

Isaiah 55:1 ""Ho! Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters; And you who have no money, Come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk Without money and without price."

This water is God:

Psalm 63:1 "<<A Psalm of David when he was in the wilderness of Judah.>> O God, You *are* my God; Early will I seek You; My soul thirsts for You; My flesh longs for You In a dry and thirsty land Where there is no water."

This water is the water that only Jesus can give:

John 4:13 -14 "Jesus answered and said to her, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, "but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.""

John 7:37 "On the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink."

Revelation 21:6 "And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts."

This water is for anyone who comes:

Revelation 22:17 "And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely."

How?

The **cross** of Christ (19a) (the rock – Exodus 17; 1 Cor. 10)

The **call** of the Christian (v. 19b) (En Hakkore = Spring of the caller)

God help us to learn from the life lessons of Samson.