

....*An Occasion Against the Philistines*

<<< *Judges 14:1 – 16:31*

~ Our previous report challenged the illusion most Christian's hold concerning Samson as a hulking muscle man. He was more of a shrimp toast as opposed to a beef cake. Samson was not the male specimen most Christians envisage him as; and he certainly isn't one we should desire to emulate in any way, shape or form. Samson had a glorious opportunity to deliver the children of Israel through marvelous God-given gifts, but he absolutely wasted it all completely. I think the total ignorance of the Bible MOST Christians possess gives them a preconceived notion of this account. Many people fall down and worship every character in the Word of God. Well, they ALL have feet of clay – just like YOU – and me.

So, we continue our Spiritual Safari expedition through the entire Word of God in this report examining a judge in Israel who lived with one foot in the grave and the other on a banana peel. Samson is a puny, scrawny, little weasel depiction of a "before" picture in any "before and after" photo comparison. I know that's not the image most people think of when they think of Samson; and that's because most people have no earthly idea what the Bible is presenting and teaching in this section of Scripture. The only thing strong or amazing about Samson was that the Spirit of God came upon him. The Spirit of God moving through Samson is remarkable; and, if there's ever anything amazing about YOU – or me – that's what it will be, too....

XIV

1 And Samson went down to Timnath, and saw a woman in Timnath 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 Timnath 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.

5 Then went Samson down, and his father and his mother, to Timnath, and came to the vineyards of Timnath: 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.

~ Now, I submit to you this account presents Samson as the greatest type of a sissy imaginable! Why didn't he speak to the woman's father personally and tell him he wanted to marry her? Well, Samson's mama and papa probably knew they were going to have to do the proposing for him, or he would likely never get married. Samson was using this as a ruse to get a woman - but God was using Samson's ruse to deliver Israel. So, we might have a plausible excuse for Samson not wanting to look her father in the eye! I have to admit: if I planned to use a woman for covert activity, I wouldn't attempt to speak to her family.

Remember, a Nazarite, which Samson was, wasn't supposed to be in the vineyards – but here Samson is in a vineyard! Further, as we move along, we find Samson breaking rule number two of the Nazarite touching the carcass of the dead lion. So, we're not even ten verses into his life story and he has broken two-thirds of the Mosaic Law regarding the Nazarite vow he took! Of course, he's not telling mom and dad what he has done. It's a cover up....

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.

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.

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? 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.

~ Well, she turns on the most powerful weapon a woman has – tears. If you listen to a woman crying for a week straight at every meal during what is supposed to be a feast, well, it gets a little monotonous and tedious. So, Samson breaks and tells her the riddle. Then, the next thing we know, the Philistine men, of course, have the answer. The wise cracking Samson has been had at this point. A weak and worthless man is emerging.

When the Spirit of the Lord came upon Samson he immediately went to Ashkelon – which is WAY down in the southern region of Israel. Samson went down there pouting that his wife had betrayed him and disclosed his secret. Killing men to get clothes he needed to pay off his gambling debts is apparently how Samson relaxed and got his mind off the wife. Of course, Samson is angry, so he isn't taking her with him. When he returns, she has remarried someone else. Marriage in that day was sort of a business deal, you see. Naturally, Samson isn't too thrilled about this, either, because nothing is going to make Samson happy - because he was not finding joy in the Lord as he should have as a Nazarite - because he broke every Nazarite vow he had made to God. We'll never be happy in disobedience, friends. Impossible....

XV

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.*

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.

~ Samson's philosophy is wrong on every level at this point; this has become personal now. Samson is only interested in avenging himself personally. Of course, that really infuriates the Philistines. Well, Samson is going to allow himself to be bound so he can fool them into thinking they had him. When he breaks out of that bind it's not done by Samson's own personal power – it's done by the power of the Spirit of God. Samson knew God's power; and this is where he begins to deliver Israel and, if Samson had kept Godly wisdom and understanding before him, his life would have been completely different. But he didn't retain discernment very long....

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.

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 thereout; 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.

XVI

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.

~ While the city is in lock-down for Samson's execution, he pulls a college student prank. He is supposed to be delivering Israel, but he's using all his God-given power for his own personal gain, and to solve his problem his own way. This is where his downward spiral begins – with another woman. No man falls suddenly into sin, friends. It is always a process and sometimes it is extremely subtle. We can be dreadfully slow to realize it. One of the biggest sins ruining the lives of men today is a love for the wrong woman. Naturally, sex is what drives ill-fated marriages; and kills MANY souls. Sex drives many people away from their call to the Lord's service, too. Well, that's Samson sin, friends – sex. It's all he wanted from Delilah. Of course,

Delilah was more interested in the silver than she was in Samson; so, we would have had a marriage made in hell - but I don't see where they even bothered getting married. All I see is a whole bunch of sin compounding into nothing worthwhile from these two individuals going forward....

4 And it came to pass afterward, that he loved a woman in the valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah.

5 And the lords of the Philistines came up unto her, and said unto her, Entice him, and see wherein his great strength lieth, and by what means we may prevail against him, that we may bind him to afflict him: and we will give thee every one of us eleven hundred pieces of silver.

6 And Delilah said to Samson, Tell me, I pray thee, wherein thy great strength lieth, and wherewith thou mightest be bound to afflict thee.

7 And Samson said unto her, If they bind me with seven green withs that were never dried, then shall I be weak, and be as another man.

8 Then the lords of the Philistines brought up to her seven green withs which had not been dried, and she bound him with them.

9 Now there were men lying in wait, abiding with her in the chamber. And she said unto him, The Philistines be upon thee, Samson. And he brake the withs, as a thread of tow is broken when it toucheth the fire. So his strength was not known.

10 And Delilah said unto Samson, Behold, thou hast mocked me, and told me lies: now tell me, I pray thee, wherewith thou mightest be bound.

11 And he said unto her, If they bind me fast with new ropes that never were occupied, then shall I be weak, and be as another man.

12 Delilah therefore took new ropes, and bound him therewith, and said unto him, The Philistines be upon thee, Samson. And there were liars in wait abiding in the chamber. And he brake them from off his arms like a thread.

13 And Delilah said unto Samson, Hitherto thou hast mocked me, and told me lies: tell me wherewith thou mightest be bound. And he said unto her, If thou weavest the seven locks of my head with the web.

~ This is the beginning of the end of Samson. His horseplay has become a serious concern, and Delilah is totally frustrated. I'm a little surprised she didn't murder the old boy herself while he slept tied up. Once he had broken all three of the commands for the Nazarite, weakening follows. Samson has gone into the vineyards, he has touched the dead carcass, and now he has the razor come upon him. From here, Delilah sees him as nothing but a fool. Samson was a fool. Verse twenty is the tragic end of a judge in Israel who should have delivered God's chosen people, but he said the same thing Satan said, "... I will..." Whenever a man says "I will" the end has already come upon that man....

14 And she fastened it with the pin, and said unto him, The Philistines be upon thee, Samson. And he awaked out of his sleep, and went away with the pin of the beam, and with the web.

15 And she said unto him, How canst thou say, I love thee, when thine heart is not with me? thou hast mocked me these three times, and hast not told me wherein thy great strength lieth.

16 And it came to pass, when she pressed him daily with her words, and urged him, so that his soul was vexed unto death;

17 That he told her all his heart, and said unto her, There hath not come a razor upon mine head; for I have been a Nazarite unto God from my mother's womb: if I be shaven, then my strength will go from me, and I shall become weak, and be like any other man.

18 And when Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart, she sent and called for the lords of the Philistines, saying, Come up this once, for he hath shewed me all his heart. Then the lords of the Philistines came up unto her, and brought money in their hand.

19 And she made him sleep upon her knees; and she called for a man, and she caused him to shave off the seven locks of his head; and she began to afflict him, and his strength went from him.

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

~ Samson's strength was not in his hair. There's no strength in ceremony and no power in the rituals of a church, either. The strength of a believer is only and ALWAYS in the Spirit of God! Samson knew that – he simply disobeyed God in his tragic life. A man who had been called to judge and deliver God's chosen people failed miserably through embracing carnality. Samson never raised an army; he never won a battle; he never rallied the children of Israel - and now his God-given strength is gone! And it was sex that brought him to the breaking point with God, by the way....

21 But the Philistines took him, and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with fetters of brass; and he did grind in the prison house.

22 Howbeit the hair of his head began to grow again after he was shaven.

23 Then the lords of the Philistines gathered them together for to offer a great sacrifice unto Dagon their god, and to rejoice: for they said, Our god hath delivered Samson our enemy into our hand.

24 And when the people saw him, they praised their god: for they said, Our god hath delivered into our hands our enemy, and the destroyer of our country, which slew many of us.

25 And it came to pass, when their hearts were merry, that they said, Call for Samson, that he may make us sport. And they called for Samson out of the prison house; and he made them sport: and they set him between the pillars.

26 And Samson said unto the lad that held him by the hand; Suffer me that I may feel the pillars whereupon the house standeth, that I may lean upon them.

27 Now the house was full of men and women; and all the lords of the Philistines were there; and there were upon the roof about three thousand men and women, that beheld while Samson made sport.

28 And Samson called unto the LORD, and said, O Lord GOD, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes.

29 And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars upon which the house stood, and on which it was borne up, of the one with his right hand, and of the other with his left.

30 And Samson said, Let me die with the Philistines. And he bowed himself with all his might; and the house fell upon the lords, and upon all the people that were therein. So the dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life.

~ So, our so-called safari ends in tragedy with the untimely death of Samson. He continuously delivered himself; but never did ANYTHING for his people. It was all about Samson during his life. By the time Samson thinks to repent, it's just too late! The end of his life was but a game to other people who made a fool of him while worshipping their own god, Dagon. A life just doesn't get any worse than this, friends. Christian Tragedy is the lesson. The last little bit of strength the Lord gave Samson was to bring about his own death. It sounds to me like suicide – but I'm not going to judge that. I will make a judgment call that Samson failed God and failed Israel, though....

31 Then his brethren and all the house of his father came down, and took him, and brought him up, and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the buryingplace of Manoah his father. And he judged Israel twenty years.

~ The birth of both the Lord Jesus Christ and Samson was foretold by an angel. They were both separated to God. They were both Nazarite men. They both went forth in the power of the Spirit of God. Both were rejected by their own people. Both Jesus and Samson destroyed their enemies in death. However, Jesus said, "the prince of this world, Satan, cometh but find nothing in Me." See, Jesus was sinless. Unfortunately, Satan found many sins in Samson. Samson's weakness was disobedience and Christ's strength was complete and utter obedience unto the Father. Samson disobeyed the Mosaic Law of his Nazarite vow and added to the grievance with sexual impurity. Jesus kept all of the Mosaic Law entirely.

Well, disobedience will destroy ANY man, my beloved. Don't bother telling me we are not under law today – I already know that – but I want to keep the law anyways. Perhaps you feel differently? If so, that's YOUR problem - not mine. Christ, on the cross, said, "Father, forgive them...." Samson said, "Avenge me!" Christ's arms were stretched out in love in death; but Samson's arms were outstretched in hatred and desiring revenge. Christ lives today; but Samson died. The Holy Spirit never leaves a Christian, to be sure; BUT you can grieve the Spirit of God until you are simply powerless. The day will come when God will no longer strive with men. God told us that WAY back in the days of Noah. The man indwelt with the Holy Spirit lives a tragic life when he willfully subdues that power in disobedience. I pray this report has richly blessed your understanding, my safari friends ~

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