

Judges, Sermon #41

Judges 13

One of my favorite stories from the Old Testament is that of Samson—Samson and his great strength—the Superman or the Incredible Hulk of the Bible—a man of great strength.

The Bible does not tell us what he looked like—Arnold Schwarzenegger of his day. The Bible tells us that Samson was strong, very strong, but when the Spirit of God left him, he was just a regular man.

Samson is the 13th judge (deliverer/savior)—Samson was the last judge in the Book of Judges.

Four chapters in the Book of Judges are dedicated and devoted to the history of Samson.

In Judges 13-14, we're introduced to Samson and his parents.

“Samson” means sunny or brightness, and we see the light flickering as Samson plays with sin.

In Judges 15-16, the light goes out and Samson dies a martyr under the ruins of a heathen temple, a sad end to a promising life.

He was the most paradoxical judge of them all:

- a deliverer who couldn't deliver himself,
- a conqueror who couldn't conquer himself,
- a strong man who didn't know when he was weak.

Two words that really describe Samson—potential and carnal (1 Corinthians 3).

I've entitled tonight's message “God's Plan for Samson”

Judges 13:1

Let us stand for the reading of God's Holy Word.

Judges 13:1-7

Let us pray.

You may be seated.

God's Plan for Samson

The Cycle Is Repeated (13:1)—the word again should indicate to you that this has happened before.

Disobedient nation

One thing we learn from history is we do not learn from history.

The idea is that they continued time and again to do evil, never breaking the trend of committing sin.

They soon turned right back to the sin that so easily entangled them (He. 12:1).

Living an inconsistent, up and down, unpredictable, and unstable life in the sight of the Lord—it had become the pattern of the Israelites.

They continued to do evil.

Rejecting the Lord and His Word is a sin that brings chastisement.

Forsaking or abandoning God, ignoring or denying Him will arouse the judgment of God against us.

Hebrews 2:1-3, *"Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.*

2 For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward;

3 How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him."

The chastisement of God—what was it?

Vs. 1—God gave them up to 40 years of Philistine oppression/domination.

The Philistines were probably the worst enemies that Israel had.

The Philistines were among the “sea people,” believed to be from the island of Crete.

They are first mentioned in Genesis 10:14.

Philistia was a small country with only five key cities.

Look at our maps.

Samson was born in Zorah, near the Philistine border; and he often crossed that border either to serve God or satisfy his appetites.

The Philistines’ national life focused around the five cities of Ashdod (Ark of God), Gaza (last stop on way to Egypt, blind Samson will end up here), Ashkelon, Gath (Goliath), and Ekron (I Sam. 6:17).

These cities were small, yet, they oppressed Israel which was a much larger nation.

The Philistines learned to smelt iron and make powerful weapons.

Turn back to Judges 15—last verse

Samson judged Israel “in the days of the Philistines” (Judges 15:20), which means that his twenty years in office were during the forty years of Philistine rule.

It is worth noting that there is no evidence given in the text that Israel cried out to God for deliverance at any time during the forty years of Philistine domination.

They did not cry to the Lord for help.

Israel had lost hope and the desire to be free from the control of the world.

They became satisfied to be in bondage to the Philistines.

Far too many Christians are satisfied to be conformed to the world—compromise, living in sin, half-hearted faith have become the norm.

It would take the prayers of Samuel (I Sam. 7) and the conquests of David (II Sam. 5:17-25) to finish the job that Samson started and give Israel complete victory over the Philistines.

Judges 13, vs. 2

This mother received a birth announcement from the Son of God.

A special situation confronted Manoah and his wife: she was barren, for they had no child.

Vs. 3a

How long has Jesus existed? Forever

Remember, “the angel of the LORD” is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, a preincarnate appearance of Him

We have every reason to believe the “angel of the Lord” who visited Manoah’s wife was Jesus Christ.

The Angel of the Lord made three appearances in Judges—Christophany

Vs. 3b—the woman received some great news—she is going to be part of the “Unique Club of Barren Mothers Who Bore Famous Sons.”

Note that some very special instructions were given to the mother by the LORD (vv. 4-5): while pregnant, she was to drink no alcoholic beverage nor eat any unclean food.

Manoah's wife had to be careful what she ate and drank because her diet would influence her unborn Nazarite son and could defile him.

It's too bad every expectant mother doesn't exercise caution; for in recent years, the news media have informed us of the sad consequences babies suffer when their mothers use tobacco, alcohol, and narcotics during a pregnancy.

Now, after the child was born, she was never to use a razor on his head.

The reason for these special instructions was that the child was being sent on a very special mission for the Lord.

Samson had a nation to protect and a God to serve (vs. 5).

He was to be a Nazarite—I did not say Nazarene, Jesus was a Nazarene because He was from Nazareth.

The very word "Nazarite" . . . means to be set apart, dedicated, or consecrated.

Any person could take the Nazarite vow: it was voluntary and usually temporary.

Three commitments to the Lord that controlled diet, appearance, and associations

They abstained from drinking wine and strong drink; they avoided touching dead bodies; and as a mark of their consecration, they allowed their hair to grow.

The laws governing the Nazirite vow are given in Numbers 6.

1. He was not to touch strong drink or use grapes in any form—no raisins.
2. Dead bodies
3. A Nazarite was not to cut his hair. Now what does that mean?

In I Corinthians 11:14 Paul says, "Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?"

The Scriptures says that long hair dishonors a man.

A Nazarite, however, would be willing to bear the shame of long hair, and that is the reason a razor was not to touch his head.

Now, Samson was to be a Nazarite from birth and Samson was the first one to be a lifelong Nazarite.

Samuel was Nazarite for life, I Samuel 1:10-11.

Hannah decided to do this.

John the Baptist was a Nazarite, Luke 1:13-15.

Note that Samson did not choose to be a Nazarite, but he was given the privilege by God Himself.

Samson was not to be temporarily dedicated to God; his entire life was to belong to God.

He was to be the great deliverer of Israel from the Philistines.

Note that this was part of the promise given to the mother by the Lord (vs. 5).

As soon as the angel left her, Manoah's wife rushed to share the wonderful news with her husband (vv. 6-7).

The Plans for Samson

Let us stand for closing invitation.