



“Open Church – Open Bible”

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Sunday Church School

June 28, 2020

“Samson Against the Philistines” – Judges 15:9-20

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“Judge 15:9-20”

Judges 15:9-20 Now the Philistines went up, encamped in Judah, and deployed themselves against Lehi.

¹⁰ And the men of Judah said, "Why have you come up against us?" So they answered, "We have come up to arrest Samson, to do to him as he has done to us."

¹¹ Then three thousand men of Judah went down to the cleft of the rock of Etam, and said to Samson, "Do you not know that the Philistines rule over us? What is this you have done to us?" And he said to them, "As they did to me, so I have done to them."

¹² But they said to him, "We have come down to arrest you, that we may deliver you into the hand of the Philistines." Then Samson said to them, "Swear to me that you will not kill me yourselves."

“Open Church – Open Bible”

“Judge 15:9-20”

¹³ So they spoke to him, saying, "No, but we will tie you securely and deliver you into their hand; but we will surely not kill you." And they bound him with two new ropes and brought him up from the rock.

¹⁴ When he came to Lehi, the Philistines came shouting against him. Then the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him; and the ropes that were on his arms became like flax that is burned with fire, and his bonds broke loose from his hands.

¹⁵ He found a fresh jawbone of a donkey, reached out his hand and took it, and killed a thousand men with it.

¹⁶ Then Samson said: "With the jawbone of a donkey, Heaps upon heaps, With the jawbone of a donkey I have slain a thousand men!"

“Open Church – Open Bible”

“Judge 15:9-20”

¹⁷ And so it was, when he had finished speaking, that he threw the jawbone from his hand, and called that place Ramath Lehi.

¹⁸ Then he became very thirsty; so he cried out to the LORD and said, "You have given this great deliverance by the hand of Your servant; and now shall I die of thirst and fall into the hand of the uncircumcised?"

¹⁹ So God split the hollow place that *is* in Lehi, and water came out, and he drank; and his spirit returned, and he revived. Therefore he called its name En Hakkore, which is in Lehi to this day.

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



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“Samson Against the Philistines”



Like Noah, Abraham, Moses, David and Daniel, Samson is one of those protagonists we are somewhat familiar. Although none of them were perfect, Samson was a man with some serious character flaws; and yet God would use him as a “JUDGE”— [a magistrate or ruler; only Gideon and Samson was by direct Divine appointment]

There are some key background factors in our account which are helpful to understanding the account:

- ❑ His birth was the matter of supernatural Divine intervention as his mother Manoah was barren (Judges 13:3)
- ❑ His life was connected to a consecrated vow (Nazarite- Num. 6:1-21) which imposed certain restrictions on the entirety of his life (13:4-5)
- ❑ The Spirit of God began to move upon his life from an early age (13:25)
- ❑ The custom of his time was for marriages to be arranged by the parents, with those of the people of God, yet in his late teens he became infatuated with the a Philistine girl in Timnah (14:1-5)



“Open Church – Open Bible”

“Samson Against the Philistines”



- ❑ His disobedience and impetuosity would cause him to violate one of the oaths of the Nazarite vow as he handed the dead carcass of an animal (14:9)
- ❑ When Samson’s new father-in-law would not allow him to sleep with his wife and would give her away to another, Samson exacted revenge by burning their fields (15:1-8)

This is a chapter seems to one of victories, yet it ends with the “strong man” utterly exhausted for lack of water.

- He burned the fields of the Philistines, but they turned around and burned the house of the woman he had loved (15:6 with 14:15).
- Samson avenged their death, but then his own people turned against him and delivered him to the enemy (V. 11–13).
- God delivered him, but then warned him by showing him how weak he was.
- We find only two prayers of Samson: here, for water (Vv. 18–20), and in for strength (Judges 16:28) to destroy the Philistines.



“Open Church – Open Bible”

“Samson Against the Philistines”



- His parents had been prayerful people, but Samson had not followed their example. God warned him here, but he would not heed the warning.

As was generally true during this period of Bible history, Israel had again forsaken the Lord. Because God loved His people, chastisement was necessary to rescue them from their own wrongheaded choices.

Since five chapters of Judges are devoted to Samson, we know more about him than the other Judges.

Our lesson today will deal with:

- I. SAMSON’S PLEA FOR LIFE** —Judges 15:9-13
- II. SAMSON’S POWER ON DISPLAY** —Judges 15:14-17
- III. SAMSON’S PRAYER FOR WATER** —Judg. 15:18-20



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“Samson Against the Philistines”



I. SAMSON’S PLEA FOR LIFE

—Judges 15:9-13

- The object of the Philistines in this expedition was to apprehend Samson, in revenge for the great slaughter he had committed on their people.
- With a view of freeing his own countrymen from all danger from the infuriated Philistines, he allowed himself to be bound and surrendered a fettered prisoner into their power.
- Exulting with joy at the near prospect of riddance from so formidable an enemy, they went to meet him.
- But he exerted his superhuman strength, and finding a new jawbone of an ass, he laid hold of it, and with no other weapon, slew a thousand men at a place which he called Ramath-lehi—that is, “the hill of the jawbone.”
- At the beginning of the account in Judges concerning Samson, we learn that the Lord delivered Israel into the hands of the Philistines for forty years.



“Open Church – Open Bible”

“Samson Against the Philistines”



- Just as before, this was because “Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord” (13:1); but God had not forgotten His people.
- The Angel of the Lord appeared to Manoah and told her she would bear a son (13:3), and this child would deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines” (13:5).
- That deliverance would not be complete until the time of David.
- The child was given the name “Samson” (13:24), which perhaps means “sun” or “sunshine,” and God’s Spirit began to work in his life.
- In our lesson, the Philistines invasion of Judah and raid upon Lehi (15:9), which means “jawbone.”
- The men of Judah felt an obligation to their Philistine overlords to capture Samson and turn him over to them.
- And Samson did not resist their purpose to deliver him to the Philistines, but he asked them to swear that they would not personally attack him.
- If they had attacked him, Samson would have had to defend himself, and in so doing he would have had to shed the blood of Israelites. Though Samson had no scruples about killing Philistines, he did not wish to kill his fellow Israelites.



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“Samson Against the Philistines”



- Vengeance rarely has an acceptable outcome; it usually just leads to more conflict.
- It is best to pay heed to what Scripture says: “Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord” (Rom. 12:19).
- 15:13 Knowing the might of Samson, the men of Judah tied him with new ropes which would have been less brittle and therefore more resilient.

II. SAMSON’S POWER ON DISPLAY —Judges 15:14-17

- The men of Judah took their prisoner to Lehi, and the Philistines rejoiced at the sight of their assailant being brought to them in fetters.
- While Samson’s enemies were shouting in triumph, the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon the captive, and he broke the cords that bound him.
- **For him they seemed as easy to break as flax that has caught fire.**
- The moment of Philistine triumph was turned into one of disaster.
- Samson grabbed the first weapon at hand, a new (literally, *fresh*) *jawbone of an ass*



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“Samson Against the Philistines”



- Can you imagine the thoughts of the men of Judah as Samson single handedly destroyed the enemy

III. SAMSON’S PRAYER FOR WATER —Judg. 15:18-20

- After the exertion of killing a thousand Philistines, Samson grew thirsty; and he felt that his weakened condition would make him a prey for the other Philistines, who would seek to avenge the death of their countrymen.
- In his distress he called upon the Lord. And God **clave an hallow place ... and there came water thereout (v 19)**.
- The noun *maktēsh*, translated hollow place, denotes a round, deep basin that was used for a “mortar” (Prov 27:22).
- In this hollow place God caused water to spring forth as a means of quenching Samson’s thirst. He called the place *En-hakkore* (*The spring of the caller*); caller is the Hebrew name for the partridge.



“Open Church – Open Bible”

“Samson Against the Philistines”



- Samson affirmed his victory in a poetic manner stating “heap upon heaps” referring the bodies laying in piles.
- Interestingly, the Hebrew word “heaps” is almost identical to the word for “donkeys.”
- Samson may have been making a play on words, saying that he had made donkeys of the Philistines.
- Samson was not the first one to use an unusual weapon as a means to battle the enemy. Previously, Shamgar had defeated six hundred Philistines with an ox goad (Judges 3:31)
- As something of a summary statement, Samson is said to have “judged Israel ... twenty years” (vs. 20).



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“Lessons from the Study”



1. Why did the Philistines invade Judah at this time?
2. What did the men of Judah want to do with Samson? What did Samson make his fellow Israelites promise?
3. How did the Philistines respond when they saw Samson being brought to them?



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“The Call of Gideon”



4. What happened when God’s Spirit came upon Samson?
5. What weapon did Samson use to battle the Philistines?
6. How might “heaps upon heaps” (Judg. 15:16) be a play on words?



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“The Call of Gideon”



- A. Has anyone ever harmed you to the point where you were consumed with getting revenge?

- B. Why is it difficult to seek revenge and serve God? What happens when we pit our energy into retaliation?

- C. What lessons do we learn about trusting in God to right the wrongs we suffer in life? Does this mean we should just take any wrong done to us?

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