

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Turn your bibles with me to Judges 14

We are going to continue our verse by verse study through the book of Judges.

Last week, we looked at the promise that the Angel of the Lord gave to Mrs. Manoah—that she was going to conceive and have a son – and He even gave her strict instructions – her son was to be set apart – to be consecrated for the work that the Lord was going to do in his life.

And at the end of our study, we saw the birth of Samson – Samson is the judge, that the Holy Spirit allocated 4 chapters to – which is by far more than any other judge.

Here was a man with great gifts & a unique calling – but he squandered it all.

He is an example of someone we can look back and say – “Here is a great example of wasted potential”

His physical strength was rendered useless because of moral weakness.

So – in his life, we have a warning.

In our text this morning, we are going to see how this wasted potential began to materialize.

Many people always come to the conclusion that it was Delilah that brought Samson down – but as we will see, before we even get to Ch 16 – we see the warning signs of his downfall.

Let's pray...

[Jdg 14:1-20 NKJV] 1 Now Samson went down to Timnah, and saw a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines.

Again, Samson was to be set apart to be the one that was going to deliver the Israelites and turn the people back to God.

They had been oppressed for over forty years –

So here at the beginning of ch 14, Samson, as the Spirit of God began to move upon him – we find him in Timnah

Now, Timnah is an important city because it was right on the border between Dan / Judah and the land that was occupied by the Philistines – remember, the Philistines liked the coast.

So at first, it appears that being in Timnah is a good thing.

Samson could be taking inventory, scouting their weakness.

Looking for some type of strategy to attack and defeat them.

But that isn't what he was doing in Timnah.

He was checking out the girls – and while he is there he saw a phillie he liked.

2 So he went up and told his father and mother, saying, "I have seen a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines; now therefore, get her for me as a wife."

I want to remind us that Samson was set apart to God – for the work that God was going to do in him and through him.

And the first recorded words from Samson in the scriptures is – “Mom, Dad – I want you to arrange a wedding with a Philistine”

He is supposed to be a Nazirite – someone totally consecrated to God.

His parents had raised him that way, so he knew well the command of God that Jews were to marry only within their nation & faith.

So right away – we see warning signs.

You see,

A heart that was loyal to God would not have sought a union with an enemy of God or His people.

His parents knew this & tried to reason with him . . .

3 Then his father and mother said to him, "[Is there] no woman among the daughters of your brethren, or among all my people, that you must go and get a

wife from the uncircumcised Philistines?" And Samson said to his father, "Get her for me, for she pleases me well."

"Samson – if you can't find a girl from Dan you like, go after one from the other tribes – Why are you going after this godless pagan?"

Samson's reply says it all – "I don't care about what's right & wrong! I want her!"

You see, Samson was a man who was governed, not by principle, but by the present desire.

He liked what he saw – and he wanted.

He lived by his eyes rather than by faith, at least at this point in his life.

Keep in mind that Samson is in Hebrews Ch 11 – Hall of Faith - But it will take a great breaking & many mistakes before he arrives there.

4 But his father and mother did not know that it was of the LORD--that He was seeking an occasion to move against the Philistines. For at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel.

Even though Samson broke his parent's heart, God was at work behind the scenes to turn Samson's willful foolish decision into a platform to begin Israel's deliverance.

Here's the lesson for us –

Samson had a divine calling to be the Judge of Israel – to be their leader. God gave him remarkable power to fulfill that call.

But Samson was so dominated by his flesh he couldn't lead anyone, including himself.

Instead of being a leader, he was lead around by his lust.

Because God had called him, & because God is faithful, God used Samson, even despite himself.

Even while Samson was blowing it, God used him to bring about the deliverance of Israel.

5 So Samson went down to Timnah with his father and mother, and came to the vineyards of Timnah. Now [to his] surprise, a young lion [came] roaring against him. 6 And the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him, and he tore the lion apart as one would have torn apart a young goat, though [he had] nothing in his hand. But he did not tell his father or his mother what he had done.

One of the things I talked about last week was that those who took the Nazarite vow – they were to stay away from anything that came from the vine.

Here Samson is in the midst of a vineyard.

And a lion comes out

[1Pe 5:8 NKJV] 8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

If he'd not gone down to Timnah, if he'd not passed through this vineyard, would the lion have attacked him? NO!

Samson put himself in the enemy's territory, so the enemy did what the enemy does – attack!

Even though Samson is being incredibly careless & willful about his lifestyle here, God graciously comes through for him when this lion attacks and Samson tore it apart.

7 Then he went down and talked with the woman; and she pleased Samson well.

8 After some time, when he returned to get her, he turned aside to see the carcass of the lion. And behold, a swarm of bees and honey [were] in the

carcass of the lion. **9 He took some of it in his hands and went along, eating.**

When he came to his father and mother, he gave [some] to them, and they also ate. But he did not tell them that he had taken the honey out of the carcass of the lion.

So the marriage is arranged, and when it was time for Samson to go pick up his little phillie, he walks through the vineyard again – he wanted to see what became of that lion he killed earlier. That's what guys do – They like to return to the place of their conquests & relive the glory of the moment.

So Samson sees the carcass – and instead of finding maggots inside the carcass – he finds a beehive. And he reaches in there and he begins to eat the honey.

So, not only has he violated the vine thing – he is violating another rule – he is touching a dead animal. Remember, they couldn't touch anything that would make them unclean. Here he is even eating the honey.

10 So his father went down to the woman. And Samson gave a feast there, for young men used to do so. 11 And it happened, when they saw him, that they brought thirty companions to be with him.

The word that is used here for feast – is the word for wild party.

Remember – this was a party at the home of the Philistines

So he was following their traditions

This was a pagan bachelor party – remember, nothing that came from a vine.

And because Samson showed up alone, the bride's parents persuaded some of the young Philistine men to attend his bachelor party.

You can't have a bachelor party by yourself.

12 Then Samson said to them, "Let me pose a riddle to you. If you can correctly solve and explain it to me within the seven days of the feast, then I will give you thirty linen garments and thirty changes of clothing. 13 "But if you cannot

explain [it] to me, then you shall give me thirty linen garments and thirty changes of clothing." And they said to him, "Pose your riddle, that we may hear it."

At the bachelor party – Samson provides the entertainment.

He attempts to entertain his new buddies by posing them a riddle – and he makes a wager with them.

If they solve it, he will owe them a new suit, if they don't solve it, they owe him a new suit.

14 So he said to them: "Out of the eater came something to eat, And out of the strong came something sweet." Now for three days they could not explain the riddle.

Now, because we just read what happened – we know that Samson is talking about the lion and the honey.

However, the 30 young men have no idea on solving the riddle – Samson didn't give any hints.

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]?"

The 30 young guys – the ones that were invited to party with Samson, they don't want to lose the bet.

So they threaten Samson's fiancé –

How's this for a group of friends? "Help us or we'll burn your house down!"

This is how you know you need new friends...

They think that she has conspired with Samson to rip them off

16 Then Samson's wife wept on him, and said, "You only hate me! You do not love me! You have posed a riddle to the sons of my people, but you have not explained [it] to me." And he said to her, "Look, I have not explained [it] to my father or my mother; so should I explain [it] to you?" 17 Now she had wept on him the seven days while their feast lasted. And it happened on the seventh day that he told her, because she pressed him so much. Then she explained the riddle to the sons of her people.

Samson could handle a lion, but he couldn't handle a woman's tears.

In a way, this is a foreshadowing of what is ahead for Samson.

He couldn't take her constant nagging – so he told her the answer to the riddle and she told it to the 30 young men.

18 So the men of the city said to 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 to them: "If you had not plowed with my heifer, You would not have solved my riddle!"

BTW – this is not a nice thing to say about your fiancé.

He refers to her as a heifer / a cow.

He knows that they must have conspired with his fiancé to get the answer to the riddle.

Now he's on the hook to come up with 30 suits.

19 Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon him mightily, and he went down to Ashkelon and killed thirty of their men, took their apparel, and gave the changes [of clothing] to those who had explained the riddle. So his anger was aroused, and he went back up to his father's house. 20 And Samson's wife was [given] to his companion, who had been his best man.

So Samson is on the hook for thirty suits, he goes to Ashkelon – he mugs and kills 30 people there, takes their clothes and pays off his bet and left in a huff without concluding the wedding feast.

His lust for that Philistine woman has been drowned by the sting of her betrayal.

And because he left – his wife was given to the best man.

[Jdg 15:1-20 NKJV] 1 After a while, in the time of wheat harvest, it happened that Samson visited his wife with a young goat. And he said, "Let me go in to my wife, into [her] room." But her father would not permit him to go in.

Samson wants to patch things up – and he brings a young goat with him - ahhhhh

Samson thought they were still married – despite him taking off.

I had you make a note that it was the wheat harvest – The mention of the wheat harvest plays into what follows next.

2 Her father said, "I really thought that you thoroughly hated her; therefore I gave her to your companion. [Is] not her younger sister better than she? Please, take her instead."

Now Samson gets the bad news.

When he stormed off & returned home, they thought that was the last they'd see of him.

They thought he had rejected her

So she was given to someone else – the best man.

The father of the bride realizes his error and tries to offer a solution – the younger daughter is available.

3 And Samson said to them, "This time I shall be blameless regarding the Philistines if I harm them!" 4 Then Samson went and caught three hundred foxes; and he took torches, turned [the foxes] tail to tail, and put a torch between each pair of tails. 5 When he had set the torches on fire, he let [the foxes] go into the standing grain of the Philistines, and burned up both the shocks and the standing grain, as well as the vineyards [and] olive groves.

Notice how Samson realizes that he overreacted when he killed the 30 guys for their suits –

But he is still angry -

So Samson is so angry that he catches 300 foxes – and he ties them together in pairs of two and places a lit torch on their tails.

That way when they ran, they would run in a zigzag pattern all across the field of the Philistines.

He is destroying their livelihood.

6 Then the Philistines said, "Who has done this?" And they answered, "Samson, the son-in-law of the Timnite, because he has taken his wife and given her to his companion." So the Philistines came up and burned her and her father with fire.

The Philistines felt they had to retaliate against Samson

However, Samson couldn't be found.

So they killed his wife and his father-in-law.

7 Samson said to them, "Since you would do a thing like this, I will surely take revenge on you, and after that I will cease." 8 So he attacked them hip and thigh with a great slaughter; then he went down and dwelt in the cleft of the rock of Etam.

Hip and thigh means that Samson was relentless in his pursuit of the Philistines.

He was relentless / thorough in his revenge.

Samson thinks it's over – he won.

9 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."

So the Philistines, they want their revenge – not only has Samson burned their fields, he has killed bunch of their guys

They come looking for Samson in Judah.

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." 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.

Notice how the men of Judah were able to gather 3000 men to go arrest one man – one of their own.

But they were not able to gather the men to fight against the Philistines

The men of Judah find Samson and they accuse him of rocking the boat - Do you not know that the Philistines rule over us? You are causing trouble. Go with the flow man.

So they tell Samson that they are there to arrest him

So Samson allows himself to be arrested.

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.**

Anytime Samson did anything that was mighty – it wasn't because Samson was strong, it was because the Lord gave him the power to do it.

The Spirit of the Lord came upon him and then he broke the ropes

So he broke the ropes and grabbed the first thing he saw – a fresh jawbone of a donkey.

Why fresh – because an old one would have been too brittle.

And he kills 1000 Philistines with it.

Now, remember, I had mentioned in the past that the Philistines were able to oppress the Israelites – not because of their numbers but because of their weapons – they had the technology – the iron chariots

However, Samson had the Spirit of God and he used whatever was in his hands at the time – a donkey jawbone to defeat them.

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!"

After killing a thousand Philistine, Samson does a little poetry.

But notice, he takes credit for defeating the Philistines.

He forgot to give glory to God – the Spirit of God came upon him -

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

Samson calls the place jawbone hill

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?"

God has a way of humbling us when we boast.

Samson begins to wine.

No sooner had Samson spoken the words of his boast than an overpowering thirst took hold of him.

And he quickly realized how dependent on God he was.

He couldn't even satisfy something as simple as the need for a drink without God's help.

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 (the one who called or cried), which is in Lehi to this day. 20 And he judged Israel twenty years in the days of the Philistines.

So we see how God used Samson to begin to deliver His people out of the oppression of the Philistines.

Now, regarding this 20 year period, Samson could have gone to the other tribes and helped turn the people back to the Lord – that is what the judges did.

However, we don't see him do that

In fact, the next time we meet, we will find Samson back in the land of the Philistines – checking out the girls – and that is where he meets Delilah.

Wasted potential -

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

[Num 6:24-26 NLT] 24 '

May the LORD bless you and protect you.

May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you.

May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace.'



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