

# How a Nation Unravels: The Book of Judges

Lesson 7

Judges 13-15

February 20, 2022

## With God, One Person Can Change a Nation

### Introduction

Samson's story is one of hope and promises on the one hand, but pride and rage on the other. Samson had a miraculous birth and was set aside as the judge of Israel. But his tenure in the leadership of Israel was characterized by violence, anger, and jealousy.

The era of judges in Israel came after the people arrived in the promised land before the era of kings. God appointed the judges to lead Israel to repentance and proper worship of Him.

God blessed Samson with his position and prodigious physical strength, but instead of responding with joy and reverence, Samson responded with prideful, selfish acts and willful disobedience.

He socialized with the Philistines and even married a Philistine woman (acts forbidden by God). Once betrayed by the Philistines, Samson responded with rage and violence. When his murderous tantrum did not quell his inner frustration, Samson followed up with lukewarm and ambiguous prayer, asking God for a drink of water.

In the same way Samson rebelled against God's blessings, Christians dishonor God when we forget that we are blessed and set apart by God and instead allow pride, jealousy, and anger to dominate our speech and actions.

***Memory verse: "The Spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon him so that he tore the lion apart with his bare hands as he might have torn a young goat. But he told neither his father nor his mother what he had done."—Judges 14:6***

Pray and read Judges 13-15. What questions or observations do you have about this passage?

**What does the passage say?**

1. What three things did the angel of the Lord tell Manoah's wife to do regarding the birth of their son? (Judges 13:4-5)
2. Who did Samson's parents believe they saw? (Judges 13:22)
3. What were Samson's parents' objections to the woman he chose to marry? (Judges 14:3)
4. What did Samson do when he met the lion? (Judges 14:5)
5. What are some of the feats that Samson was able to do with his great physical strength? (Judges 14:6, 14:19, 15:8, 15:15)
6. How long was Samson a judge of the Israelites? (Judges 15:20)

## **What does the passage mean?**

1. Why do you think the Lord took an entire chapter to describe where Samson came from and how Samson came to be so strong? (Judges 13)
2. Part of the promise of a Nazirite was not to touch anything unclean, which included dead bodies. When did Samson break this part of his oath? (Judges 13:7, 14:8-9)
3. What are some of the other destructive and sinful things that Samson did out of pride and anger? (Judges 14, 15)
4. Even though Israel was under the Philistines' control, God had given Israel stringent rules about not fraternizing with the Philistines. Did Samson avoid the Philistines, or did he mingle and mix with the Philistines? (Judges 14-15)

5. Samson believed that he was justified in burning the Philistine crops. What do you think the real reason was for this action? (Judges 15:1-5)
  
6. Samson prayed for water after killing the Philistines with the donkey's jawbone. (Apparently, killing 1000 Philistines with your bare hands makes one thirsty.) Think about what his motivations might have been for praying at this time. Do you think that he really prayed simply for water? Was it to somehow ask for God's blessings, or was it something else? (Judges 15:17-20)

### **Applying the passage**

1. Think for a few minutes about how many ways you have been set apart by God and write them down. How do these blessings define your role(s) in God's kingdom? (Judges 13; Romans 12:1-3; 1 Peter 2:9-10)

2. God desired to remove Israel's enemies from Canaan. In this way, Samson's actions supported God's ultimate goals but were done for the wrong reasons. In what ways have you seen God's work occur despite (and even through) the disobedient acts of Christians? (Deuteronomy 20; Judges 14-15)

3. After years of disobedience, Samson showed his first desire for fellowship with God by praying a brief and superficial prayer asking for water. Think about when you were straying from Jesus in disobedience but then came back to him. What were your first prayers like when you ventured back to Him? Were they deep and repentant prayers, or were they simple, uncomplicated prayers seeking His presence? (Judges 15:18-20)