

THE BOOK OF JUDGES

"Samson's Final Triumph"

Judges 16:1-31

Introduction

1. Four important chapters are devoted to Samson's life and judgeship (Judges 13-16). Whereas Gideon and others involved others in their activities, Samson was virtually alone. This may have been due to the fact that Israel did not want to fight the Philistines (15:11-13). God uses all types of leadership.

2. Samson's birth was arranged by the Angel of the Lord (13:2-25). He was a Nazarite from the beginning and given the assignment to "begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines" (13:5). It is true, he was not perfect. He had lustful contact with three women (14:1-4; 16:1-3, 4-22). But these were also employed of God against the Philistines. The Spirit of God was his personal power (13:25; 14:6, 19; 15:14).

3. Samson's final days provide three final contacts with the Philistines. Here they are:

1. With the HARLOT vv. 1-3.

Gaza was one of the five Philistine cities. It is here that Samson falls into a lustful experience. It is recorded that Samson does not stay the night with the harlot, but at midnight he seems to be moved with guilt. In response, he carries off the city gates and takes them to a hill which looks toward Hebron. Hebron is the place of "alliance" or "communion." He moves in that direction, but he does not go all the way. How much better it would have been to go all the way! In any case, Samson was wrong in what he did, but right in using the situation as an "occasion" against the Philistines. It is obvious that the Lord was still with Samson.

2. With DELILAH vv. 4-22.

Apparently, this woman was not profligate. She rather saw an opportunity to make some money (about \$5000). She may not even have been a Philistine. This woman put Samson to the test four times, in three of which he told falsehoods. They all related to the source of his strength (v. 6).

a. Test 1 vv. 5-9.

The word "withs" means "sinews" of an animal which could be used for bowstrings, "hence seven moist bowstrings." Samson broke these easily. The text reads: "so

his strength was not known."

b. Test 2 vv. 10-12.

Here the items used were new unused ropes. These also did not hold Samson.

c. Test 3 vv. 13-14.

Here the locks of Samson's hair were woven with a "pin." Although the Hebrew is difficult here, it may well mean that a part of a loom was used. Some actually believe that Samson rose up and took the entire loom with him, while others believe it was just a part of the loom. In any case, Samson was moving toward a fall in that he mentioned his "hair" which was the source of his strength. Admittedly, the strength was the Lord (v. 20), but his hair was an essential of his vow to God!

d. Test 4 vv. 15-21.

Here Samson fell. He told Delilah all of his heart. She knew he had come to the end. He had told his secret. When the Philistines came upon him, he was without strength. His end had come. There is a great contrast here between Samson (v. 20) and Moses (Ex. 34:29). The end was horrible (v. 21). He ended up taking the place of a woman at the mill (Ex. 11:5).

3. With DAGON vv. 22-31.

Samson's final contact with Philistine might comes in his last days. He is in prison. The issue now is taken up by God for Dagon, the Philistine fish-god is the issue (cf. 1 Sam. 5). Following an humiliating expression of his strength, Samson calls upon the Lord for strength in his waning hours (v. 28). God has mercy and enables him to perform against Philistia one final time (vv. 29, 30). Relatives came to take his body away from the rubble, since he died in his final effort against the enemy.

Conclusion Many items of importance concern Samson. Here are some of them: 1) His birth was announced by the Angel of the Lord. 2) He was a Nazarite from his birth. 3) He kept his vow until his deception by Delilah. 4) He was empowered by the Holy Spirit. 5) He gained a degree of success in his assignment against Philistia. 6) He performed, under God, many mighty feats. 7) He is recorded in the roll of the faithful (Heb. 11:32). But one last -- 8) Samson failed through activities of the flesh. So the message comes loud and clear to us (1 Cor. 10:11).