

A CHARACTER STUDY ON

SAMSON

Lesson 2

“IT WAS OF THE LORD”

Judges 14:1 - 20

Study 2

Adult Sunday School

Gethsemane Baptist Church

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SAMSON

II. "IT WAS OF THE LORD"

Samson was a man who was chosen from his birth to accomplish a specific purpose. The angel of the LORD that announced his birth specifically said, "He shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines." (Judges 13:5b) "The truth is Samson was himself a riddle, a paradox of a man that did that which was really great and good, by that which was seemingly weak and evil." (MHenry P. 208)

There is gap in time between Judges 13: 23 and 14: 1. The only information we have about this period of time is in 13:24-25. From these two verses we learn:

- 1) The child, Samson was born and grew.
- 2) The LORD blessed him.
- 3) The Spirit began to move him.

Given the circumstances in chapter 13, chapter 14 seems to give us a very strange story. As verse 1 begins Samson has grown into a young man old enough to begin to seek a wife. He tells his parents that he has seen a Philistine woman in the village of Timnath, a village a short distance away. He instructs them to go and arrange the betrothal with her for him. His parents object that she is one of the oppressing invaders. Why choose her? His response is, "she pleases me well." This expression conveyed more than a physical or emotional pleasing. Literally interpreted, the expression could mean, "She is

right for my purpose.” It would seem that Samson has more to his plan than marriage. He was born and raised to be the deliverer of his people. Whether he had a conscious plan to use this engagement as an opportunity to drive the Philistines out or not is unclear. God certainly had a plan to bring to pass the defeat of the Philistines. Verse 4 tells us that, *“His father and his mother knew not that it was of the LORD, that he sought an occasion against the Philistines.”* It is not immediately clear if the “he” in verse 4 refers to the Lord or to Samson. Because of the closeness in the sentence to the word “Lord” it is reasonable to assume that the Lord, himself sought the occasion against the Philistines. The wondrous lesson of the verse is that God often involves Himself in the affairs of men to accomplish His perfect will. This is always ultimately for man’s benefit.

By the end of verse seven the engagement is arranged. Samson returns home to wait the proper betrothal time of one year to prepare a home for his bride. On the initial visit Samson had faced and slain a vicious lion. Scripture tells us, *“And the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him, and he rent him as he would have rent a kid, and he had nothing in his hand.”* This moving of the Spirit upon him to enable him to kill the lion was to prove that he was an instrument in the hand of God. God’s purpose at this point was to drive the Philistines out of the land. The conflict at the wedding feast would bring this purpose to light.

The instance of the honey from the Lion proves what an unusual man Samson was. During the intervening year the carcass had dried sufficiently that a swarm of bees had found it and made it into their hive. A Nazarite from his

birth, Samson was not permitted to touch a dead body. Ignoring the prohibition, he eats the honey. Later at the wedding feast Samson counts on this fact to confuse the guests as they try to solve his riddle. The riddle was of the honey from the lion carcass. For three days they try to solve the puzzle with no success. Their true nature reveals itself in verse 15 when they threaten the bride with the destruction of her father's home. These Philistines did not want to lose the wager that they had made with Samson. *"Have ye called us to take that we have? Is it not so?"* (14:15b) She began to beg for the answer from Samson. Finally, on the last day of the wedding feast he told her the answer, *"Because she lay sore upon him."* When "the children of her people" produce the answer, Samson in anger went and killed 30 men of Ashkelon to take their garments to pay his debt. In this manner the plan of God came to pass. A blow against the oppressive Philistines was delivered. Later in chapter 15 we find his anger kindled again when he learns that because he did not claim his bride, she was given to someone else. In anger he burns the standing corn of the Philistines. They retaliate and burn the home of his bride. Samson then attacks them with only the jaw bone of an ass and kills 1000 men. Samson was very angry and returned to his father's house without his bride. It was not in God's plan for His people to marry into the pagan nation. This is a reminder that the child of God today should unite in marriage only with another believer.

Samson was a man of riddles. Not just the riddle of the lion but why he would seek a Philistine wife. Why would he touch a dead body? It could be that this was his plan all

along. It is also likely that he was not fully aware of how God was moving these events along in order to use him in this plan. He certainly was an instrument in the hand of God, and God was using him to accomplish His plan.

Ideas to consider:

1) Do you think that Samson chose this woman because he was pleased by her or because she fit into his plan to destroy the Philistines.

2) Do you see God's hand in this story. Did He use Samson in this instance to accomplish His will?

3) What do you think was the true nature of the wedding guests?

4) What was the overall plan of God in this story?

References:

Wycliffe = The Wycliffe Bible Commentary. Moody Press. 1962.

JFB = Jamieson, Fauset and Brown A Commentary, Vol.1. 1946.

MHenry = Matthew Henry. Vol 2. Fleming H. Revell Co.

Notes

