

A CHARACTER STUDY ON

# SAMSON

Lesson 4

## OUT OF WEAKNESS, MADE STRONG

Judges 16:1 - 3

Study 4  
Adult Sunday School  
Gethsemane Baptist Church  
H. David Nichols

# SAMSON

## IV. OUT OF WEAKNESS, MADE STRONG

We read of the story of Samson in the book of Judges Chapters 13 - 16. We are told of the announcement of his birth by the angel of the LORD. The purpose of his life is given to us in Judges 13:5. The angel announces that, "*he [Samson] shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines.*" It was God's plan to deliver His wayward children out of the domination of the Philistines. As we read, it is easy to make the mistake of thinking that the story is about Samson. As we examine the events of the narrative, we have come to realize that the hero of the story is not Samson but the Spirit of God. Samson is the dedicated man that the Spirit of God uses to execute His divine plan to deliver His people.

Samson lived at a time when, "*There was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes,*" (Judges 17:6) After the leadership of Joshua and the elders that out lived Joshua had passed; "*there arose another generation after them, which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which He had done for Israel. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord.*" (Judges 2:10-11) This was a lawless time in Israel and it is no wonder that the lawlessness

would be reflected in the life of Samson. The student of the Old Testament often pauses in wonder as he approaches the book of Judges. It seems that the Lord blessed people that were living lives that were hardly characterized by godliness. The battle that grew out of Samson's wedding to the Philistine woman of Timnath is a case in point. Of all the unbiblical things that happened in this story we find that in verse 4 of chapter 14 that *"it was of the Lord."* There is a difference between what God desires for His people, demands of His people, and yet will permit in His people. Samson was not an example of godliness in this instance but God was able to make this "wrath of man" to accomplish His plan.

As we approach Judges chapter 16, we are told a rather unusual story of the working of the Spirit of God in the life of Samson. Chapter 15 ends with the formula *"And he judged Israel in the days of the Philistines twenty years."* In other places this kind of phrase seems to indicate that a period of time has passed since the previous event. After the death of 1000 Philistines as well as the other battles that they had lost to Samson, it seems that the Philistines had not had any further contact with him. Gaza was a city some miles from his home and he seems to move with impunity across Philistine territory. He went to Gaza, found a prostitute and *"went into her."* In the midst of this sin the men of the city thought they had found an opportunity to kill him. They were lying in wait to kill him until

midnight when he arose and left the city. Gaza is a major city of the Philistines. It was a city with strong walls and gates and Samson, in the power of the Spirit of God, pulled the massive doors and door posts down. He hoisted them upon his shoulders and carried them 40 miles away to the town of Hebron.

After reading the story in the Scriptures one wonders just what lessons we can learn from this strange story. For example, why did Samson destroy and carried off the gates of the city? The most obvious thing that the citizens of Gaza would have thought is, what a powerful God the Hebrews serve. None of the mean and beggarly gods of the Philistines had the ability to enable a man to do something so amazing. Remember, the destiny of Samson was to deliver the Jews. An important part of that deliverance is to bring them back to following the true God of Heaven. What a powerful illustration of the ability of the Lord Jehovah this was. The powerful city of Gaza, a city so self-sufficient in their walls and behind massive, strong gates, was left completely exposed to enemy invasion. They must have realized that had God wanted to destroy them he certainly was able to do so and at any time He chose. God's people were learning what their ancestors had learned in the Exodus, God exists and He will keep his promises to His people. He was re-introducing Himself to His people.

In Hebrews 11:32-34, the name of Samson is mentioned. He is listed with several other heroes of Faith. He stopped a lion's mouth and out of weakness was made strong. God saw fit to use this failing human to accomplish His purpose for His people, Israel. God can use you and me today to accomplish His purpose. Let us be alert to that purpose every day and seek to be useful tools in His hands.

Ideas to consider:

1) Why do you think the hero of Samson's story is the

Holy Spirit?

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2) How was the lawlessness of Israel reflected in

Samson's life?

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3) How can we apply the lesson that the Jews learned to ourselves today?

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4) What purpose is God using you to accomplish today?

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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.

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