

SAMSON: GOD'S POWER MANIFEST



JUDGES 14-15

INTRODUCTION

From Judges 13:

- The Lord appeared miraculously to Samson's parents
- Called Him to a Nazarite life (no alcohol, not to touch anything unclean, or cut his hair)
- He was to be Israel's Judge who would begin to lead his people out from under the hand of the oppressive Philistines

We pick up in Ch 14-15 some years later

- Samson is a man now
- And what we see of Samson's life in these passages, can be broken up much like a 2 movie set with each scene playing each of the themes out for us

Episode 1: A Book of Secrets (Chapter 14)

Scene 1: YHWH's Secrets

Scene 2: Samson's secret strength

Scene 3: Samson's sweet secret

Scene 4: The Philistine's secret agent

Episode 2: Samson's Revenge (Chapter 15)

Scene 1: Clothed in Vengeance

Scene 2: A Harvest of Vengeance

Scene 3: Burning with Vengeance

Scene 4: Revenge on Jawbone Hill

Episode 1: A Book of Secrets

Scene 1: YHWH's Secret (1-4)

- **Samson desires to marry a Philistine**
- **His parents are heartbroken and question him**
- **The Lord is using it to carry out His plan against the Philistines (behind the scenes)**

4 However, his father and mother did not know that it was of the Lord, for He was seeking an occasion against the Philistines. Now at that time the Philistines were ruling over Israel.

“Samson sins here, but God is sovereign and was able to turn the situation to please Him. He was not at a loss, but used the opportunity to work against the wicked Philistines and provided gracious help to His people. He achieved destruction of these people, not by an army, but by the miraculous power of one man” (MacArthur)

Application:

- God is not hindered from accomplishing His purposes by our sin
- In fact God can and does use man's sin to accomplish His sovereign purposes

“Frequently, all we see are the onions of a situation. The sin or smell of disappointment seems to dominate the scene, seems to cover the whole map. But perhaps that is only the cover for YHWH's secret work; perhaps our greatest comfort is hidden in what we don't know or see; perhaps it is “from YHWH”, who has his own saving design to work either through or in spite of yuck and muck. Many Christian parents have stood in the sandals of Manoah (Samson's father) and his wife. They have, though realizing their own sinful inadequacies, faithfully taught, prayed for, disciplined, and loved their son or daughter only to see that child willfully turn from the way of the Lord. No one can deny it is anything but devastating. Yet no one should forget verse 4: “But his father and mother did not know it was of the Lord”. What we don't know may yet prove to be our deepest comfort” (Davis)

Episode 1: A Book of Secrets

Scene 2: Samson's Secret Strength (5-6)

Question: What is the key to his strength?

Answer: "The Spirit of the Lord came upon him mightily"

Scene 3: Samson's sweet secret (7-9)

The main point from this scene is ...

Regardless of man's attempts to hide his sin, God always sees

"Remember that thought is speech before God" (Spurgeon)

***Psalm 139:1–8 (NASB95)** — 1 O Lord, You have searched me and known me. 2 You know when I sit down and when I rise up; You understand my thought from afar. 3 You scrutinize my path and my lying down, And are intimately acquainted with all my ways. 4 Even before there is a word on my tongue, Behold, O Lord, You know it all. 5 You have enclosed me behind and before, And laid Your hand upon me. 6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is too high, I cannot attain to it. 7 Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? 8 If I ascend to heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, You are there.*

Episode 1: A Book of Secrets

Scene 4: The Philistine's secret agent (10-18)

- As part of the custom, there were 30 philistines that were given to him as part of this ceremony
- And for sport he proposes a riddle:

“Out of the eater came something to eat, And out of the strong came something sweet.”

- What is the prize?

“In western terms, the stakes would be 30 sets of underwear and 30 new suits. If the Philistines win, each of them would sport a new “easter” outfit at the next Dagon festival. If the Philistines lose, Samson will own the swankiest wardrobe in the country” (Davis)

“If you had not plowed with my heifer, You would not have found out my riddle.”

Episode 2: Samson's Revenge

Chapter 15

Scene 1: Clothed in Vengeance (14:19)

- The Lord is the one claiming the victory

Scene 2: A Harvest of Vengeance (14:20-15:5)

- Infuriated, Samson develops a creative plan to destroy their entire farming industry overnight
- He catches 300 foxes, ties their tails together, between a torch...and then lets them loose in the Philistines' grain fields

Scene 3: Burning with Vengeance (15:6-8)

- Philistines burn Samson's wife, Father in law, and his whole family
- Samson "slaughtered them leg and thigh"

Scene 4: Revenge on Jawbone Hill (15:9-17)

"The Lord had placed Samson under a special set of regulations, including the provision that he not touch anything dead, and Samson had persistently ignored those rules. Yet the Lord, within His providential purposes, chose to use Samson in spite of his shortcomings to perform miraculous feats against Israel's enemies. Samson single-handedly stirred up the people of Israel to rise against the Philistine oppression" (MacArthur)

Episode 2: Samson's Revenge

Chapter 15

- *Question: What is the point?*
- *Answer: To show the futility of warring against God*

Philistine Attempt	God's Outcome
Threaten Samson's wife and get the answer of the riddle	Samson slaughters 30 men at Ashkelon and takes their clothes
Samson's Father in law threatened and Samson's wife is given away to his best man	Samson releases the foxes and destroys the Philistines' farm industry overnight
The Philistines burn Samson's wife and father in law	Samson slaughters Philistines with a great slaughter
Philistines pressure Judah, Samson is bound	Samson kills 1,000 men with the jawbone of a donkey

“The Philistines are the enemies of YHWH's people. Here their stupidity is held up for ridicule; here they are made the laughing stock of Israel. Why? To show us the peril of being an enemy of YHWH's people (even of his sinful people), for YHWH makes fools of those who seek to ruin and crush His people. O the awesomeness and fearfulness of Israel's God! His enemies-and theirs-are kids' stuff for Him; He toys with them and makes His people able to laugh at them. It is a ghastly thing to make oneself the object of divine laughter” (Davis)

IN CONCLUSION ...

God's power is perfected in man's weakness

- Lion killing
- YHWH ability to accomplish his purposes amidst sin
- Power to destroy a powerful people through one man
- And through an imperfect and spiritually weak man

Remember what Paul said ...

Romans 1:16 (NASB95) — 16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes,

- The same power that the Spirit of God manifest in Samson to defeat God's enemies
- Is the same power He uses to deal with our sin in Christ
- How much more powerful is it to save us?

- What is our response?

God's wrath is fierce...repent now and believe the Gospel!

-we see the power of God manifest in one man
-he wipes out 30 men, and then 1,000
-a mortal man, empowered by the Holy Spirit of God
-destroying God's enemies
-Samson is but a small brush stroke on the infinite canvas of God's wrath that will be poured out against sinners in the future
The response now...Repent and believe...escape the future wrath of God

Question: how do we do that?...through the person of Jesus Christ

Paul speaking in 1 th 1:9-10

1 Thessalonians 1:9–10 (NASB95) — 9... how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God, 10 and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come.