

God's Providence in God's People

Contra Costa Gospel Church
Adult Sunday School

THE JUDGES (Part 6)

"Again, the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord, so the Lord delivered them into the hands of the Philistines for forty years" (Judges 13:1). This is a familiar refrain, the repeated lament of the author regarding the state of Israel at this time. Despite the fact that the Lord delivers her time and again from the hands of her enemies/oppressors, she continues to demonstrate disloyalty to her God and King. Furthermore, the judges that the Lord uses to free Israel from these enemies are of no help in bringing spiritual revival to this people - so far. Perhaps this next judge, the last of the book, will be the honorable man to lead Israel that she has been waiting for. Perhaps he will be the one to restore Israel to a state of faithfulness to the Lord, to be a pillar of faith himself. Perhaps...

Samson

- 1) The introduction of Samson into the narrative is found in Judges 13:1-25. How would you describe the "tone" of Samson's introduction and the outlook of Israel with regards to this judge? Are you feeling optimistic about this judge and the prospects of his leadership? Or will this be the "same ol' same ol'" as we've seen before?
- 2) If the point of the Book of Judges is to push people to long for the Messiah, how does Samson's introduction accomplish that?
- 3) More than just her biology, what does it tell us about Manoah and his wife that she was "sterile and remained childless"?
- 4) In light of Question 3, how does that affect our reading of the angel's visit in 13:3?
- 5) The boy that will be born to Manoah and his wife is to be a Nazirite, set apart to God from birth (13:5). Read Numbers 6:1-8. What are the specifics of this kind of vow and the subsequent lifestyle?

- 6) In 14:1-2, we see that Samson wants to take a Philistine woman as his wife. Why do his parents have a problem with this as seen in 14:3?

- 7) What do you do with 14:4? What do you think it means when the author says that “this was *from* the Lord?” Why is this difficult to accept and understand at face value?

- 8) We see in 14:5 Samson’s brute strength in defeating and tearing apart a lion that was attacking him. He returns to this lion in 14:8-9 and eats honey from the lion’s carcass? How are we, as the reader, supposed to understand this? What does this tell us about Samson?

- 9) In 14:10-20, we read about the wedding feast celebrating his marriage to the Philistine woman. At this feast he presents his Philistine guests with a riddle, and makes them a wager that they accept.
 - a. How is Samson portrayed in this interaction with the companions?

 - b. How is Samson portrayed in his interaction with his wife?

 - c. How is Samson portrayed in his payment of the companions?

 - d. How is Samson portrayed in 14:20?