

# God's Providence in God's People

Contra Costa Gospel Church  
Adult Sunday School

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## THE JUDGES (Part 7)

The beginning of the account of Samson was so promising. A baby born to a barren woman, foretold by angelic proclamation, set apart from birth according to the Nazirite vow. This had all the makings of the great leader Israel had longed for, the one who was necessary to bring her into a state of peace and blessing through obedience to the Law. Sadly, Samson was not this leader.

What we find, instead, is a man devoted to himself, driven and controlled by his own desires and passions, who foolishly makes decisions not based on what is right and wrong, but on what he feels is appropriate at that time. In him we see a microcosm of the state of Israel during this time: "In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit" (Judges 17:6). This is exactly who Samson is, someone who simply does what is right in his own eyes.

- 1) In Judges 15, we read about Samson's attempt to consummate his marriage to his wife in vv. 1-2. However, her father admits to giving the woman to Samson's attendant (i.e. "best man") on the wedding night, probably in response to Samson's behavior at the wedding feast. Read Judges 15:1-3. Let's evaluate 15:3. Does Samson really have a right to take revenge on the Philistines? Why or why not? Consider this: who started the fight?
- 2) This chapter becomes a back-and-forth display of anger and brutality between Samson and Philistines, each trying to "take revenge" against the other because of some harm done. Let's list out the actions done to each other between the two warring parties:

### **Samson**

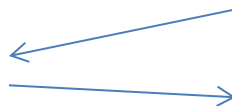
### **Philistines**

Challenged guests to riddle



Guests cheated in order to get riddle's answer

Killed 30 Philistines in order to pay reward



- 3) Is there a difference between these types of actions taken by Samson (which we understand are in reaction to the circumstances) versus the killing of an enemy on the field of battle? Are they categorically different or not? Incidentally, it's worth noting that his action in Judges 15:4-5 is in violation of Israelite law (see Exodus 22:6).
  
- 4) The intertwining of events in these chapters is full of irony. How is the death (by burning) of the woman and her father (in Judges 15:6) ironic taking into consideration the events of Judges 14? Also, why do you think they were burned alive?
  
- 5) Having read several accounts of Samson's life already, let's read his victory over the Philistine force assembled to bring justice against Samson (Judges 15:14-16).
  - a. Knowing what we know about Samson, what can we say about the method by which he kills a thousand Philistine soldiers?
  
  - b. Knowing what we know about Samson, what can we say about his "song" found in 15:16? How does his song indicate his perspective regarding his victory? Compare this song with the songs of Deborah (Judges 5) and Miriam after the destruction of the Egyptians (Exodus 15:21).
  
- 6) We read in Judges 15:18 Samson's first prayer to the Lord, and really, his first mention of the Lord at all. How would you characterize this prayer? What is the content of the prayer? What is the request? How does this request stay in line with what we know of Samson already? Also interesting to note that after receiving water, he named the spring "En Hakkore," which means "the spring/fountain of the one who calls." How does this piece of information color our reading of this short paragraph?

The last section regarding Samson's entreaty for water (Judges 15:18-19) is one that by all accounts was not necessary in order to tell the story of his defeat of the Philistines. Instead, it was provided by the author for a very specific reason – to tell us more about the character and heart of Samson. How does the author want us to see Samson? And in turn, how does the Lord want us to see the Lord?

It would seem that the Lord providing water for Samson is similar to the Lord providing water for Israel in the desert. Both were faithless and grumbling. And yet, the Lord, compelled by compassion and love, provides for them both. What does that tell us about Him?