

# CALVARY PANDAN BIBLE- PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

[Adapted from Bethel Bible-Presbyterian  
Church, 10 Downing St. Oakleigh, Vic., 3166]

## DHW BIBLE CLASS

### LESSON 11B

### JUDGES

### CHAPTER 14

**Judges 14:19**, *“And the Spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he went down to Ashkelon, and slew thirty men of them, and took their spoil, and gave change of garments unto them which expounded the riddle. And his anger was kindled, and he went up to his father's house.”*

## INTRODUCTION

Life is stranger than fiction is arguably one of the best ways to describe this chapter in the book of Judges. As a Nazarite, Samson had to follow very strictly and rigidly three rules. He must not cut his hair, drink wine or strong drink, and touch a dead body during the period of the vow. In the case of Samson it would be for life as his was a lifetime vow.

A man gifted by God with superhuman strength Samson possessed superhuman weakness that countermanded his strength He sinned the sin of the lust of the flesh over and over again. He threw caution to the wind as long as his

lusts for women were satisfied. With his superhuman strength he could do practically whatever he wanted. There seemed to be nothing that could stop him. His heart's desire became his reality.

The higher hand of God was in all that Samson did even though he was unaware. God would use his reckless behavior, even his sins to punish the Philistines. Psalm 76:10 aptly captures the rebellious life of Samson, “Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.” The sovereignty of God does not destroy or diminish human responsibility at all. God's sovereignty controls all that man does according to His absolute and prophetic will so much so that before man does anything, God knows of it and has already determined it before the foundation of the world! Such is the power of the Almighty God in a world of deluded sinners who think that they are the captains of their own destinies when in reality they could not even control one strand of their falling hair.

Samson was a very strange judge compared to the others, especially the early judges such as Gideon. Gideon knew that he was doing God's will after God called him, but not Samson. In fact if Samson had been called he would probably have rejected his calling. He was a man full of self, and seeking his own hearts desire was paramount in his

wicked and self destructive life. He had everything him but he threw it all away by his profligate life of sin and debauchery. It destroyed him. This chapter begins the story of this self destruction.

### OUTLINE

1. Samson Desires to Marry (14:1-9)
2. Samson Loses the Wager (14:10-20).

### COMMENTARY

#### **Samson Desires to Marry – 14:1-9**

Samson grew up to be a strong man. One day he went to Timnath, a town on the northern border of Judah, which was occupied by the Philistines. There he saw a Philistine woman whom he desired to marry. He told his parents to get the woman for him which was the way marriage was done then. Parents of either party would approach each other to make arrangements for the marriage. If everything was agreed upon, then a dowry would be agreed upon and the marriage would come to pass. The problem was that Samson was an Israelite and the woman was a Philistine. It was a problem of an unequal yoke. There is no law against marrying a Gentile so long as the Gentile becomes a proselyte. But it was not the case here as the reaction of the parents intimated. Samson wanted her based

purely upon his lust and her physical looks.

Surely this request of Samson broke the hearts of Manoah and his wife. They asked Samson: “Is there never a woman among the daughters of thy brethren, or among all my people, that thou goest to take wife of the uncircumcised Philistine?” This was good counsel. But will the will of the parents prevail or that of their son’s? What ought to be the biblical approach of the parents to Samson’s insistence?

Samson ignored his parents’ counsel and insisted that they get her for him because “she pleaseth me well”—in Hebrew, “she was right in his own eyes” (v.3). The phrase “a woman in Timnath of the daughter of the Philistines” which is mentioned three times (14:1-3) is deliberate. The divine author wants to emphasis this truth that Samson was rebellious and willful and cared not for what was right or wrong. Samson wanted the woman because she was right in his own eyes. But his choice was a blatant violation of the commandment of God.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Deuteronomy 7:1 When the LORD thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou; 2 And when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, *and* utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them: 3 Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son.

The divine commentary records that the parents did not know that “that it was of the LORD, that he sought an occasion against the Philistines” 14:4). This does not mean that the LORD approved of Samson’s choice. The divine commentary must be understood that the LORD will work out His plan and purpose even using the ungodly desires of fallen men. Samson was responsible for his bad choice and blatant disobedience of God’s commandment and the ensuing judgment. He would have to face the consequences of his sin. This is a clear illustration of the absolute sovereignty of God over all the affairs of man including man’s sins and rebellion. Man can never thwart or delay or stop the sovereign will of God from being fulfilled.

So, Samson and his parents went to Timnath. On the way, he was attacked by a lion which he killed with his bare hands, tearing it in two as if it were a young goat. This supernatural strength that he exhibited came from the Spirit of the LORD. It seemed that Samson took his super strength for granted. He kept this incident secret from his parents. In Timnath he talked to the woman. What transpired is not revealed, but once again it is noted that “she pleased Samson well” (14:7). The next trip to Timnath was to take the woman but he stopped to look at the carcass of the lion and found a swarm of bees and honey in

it.<sup>2</sup> He helped himself to the honey and when he came to his parents, he gave them the honey but kept from them the source of the honey. In this regard, Samson broke one of his Nazarite vows by touching a dead body—the carcass of the lion.

Samson broke it the first time when he killed the lion. The touching of the lion on his return trip was a double confirmation of his breaking it again with impunity. He does not care one whit what the Word of God teaches which means he does not care what God thinks!

### **Samson Loses the Wager— 14:10-20**

Samson celebrated by having a “feast” which was customary with the young men there. This “feast” was a drinking banquet, which could last for a week, after which he would claim his bride and consummate the union. Once more, Samson broke another Nazarite vow — to abstain from alcohol. This was the second rule of the Nazarite vow that he must observe strictly. But again it reveals Samson’s contempt for God’s law! He was a man whose behaviour typifies the conduct of the rest of Israel in those days. They did what was right in their own eyes with arrogance, and threw caution to the wind!

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<sup>2</sup> “Apparently the lion had almost by-passed the stages of decay and being putrified and went straight to being petrified. Again, God was at work.” (Holman Old Testament Commentary: Judges, Ruth, Gen. ed. Max Anders, author W. Gary Phillips, p.221).

Samson was probably perceived as a dangerous man, so 30 Philistine “companions” were brought to guard him. However, he made a wager with these men. He gave them a riddle in which they must solve it in seven days. If they succeeded he would give them 30 “change of garments.” These garments were fine and expensive linen outer garments. But if they failed, they must give him the same number of garments.

The riddle was (paraphrasing): “from the eater comes out something to eat, and from the strong comes out something sweet.” It was impossible. After three days the riddle remained unsolved. They were terribly frustrated. From the beginning they had planned to get the answer by coaxing Samson’s wife. When they could not find the answer themselves, they enticed Samson’s wife to get her husband to divulge the answer to the riddle. If she refused, they threatened to burn her and her father’s house.

The right thing for her to do was to tell Samson the dilemma she was in. He would have protected her easily. Instead she tried to coax the answer out of Samson through continued nagging and emotional blackmail. She wept before Samson throughout the feast, nagging him for the answer. Samson eventually succumbed. On the seventh day he told her the answer which she in turn conveyed to the 30 men. They got the answer, but Samson knew that they had worked on his wife—“if ye had not plowed on my heifer, ye had not found out my riddle” (14:18). To plough someone means that they

worked on her pretty hard like a person ploughing the earth.

The Spirit of the LORD came upon him again and this is a clear indication of the endowment of Samson with supernatural strength. He went down to Ashkelon a town occupied by the Philistines where he slew 30 Philistine men and took their garments as payment of the wager. Samson was enraged and returned home to his father’s house. Alas, Samson’s wife had been given to the man who was his best man in the wedding.

### **PRACTICAL VALUE**

Samson was a spiritual bum. He had great potential but he despised it. He became self-assertive and ignored the vows which his parents must have taught him. At this juncture he broke two rules of the Nazarite vow by touching a dead body and by indulging in a drinking party. In addition, he disobeyed God by stubbornly demanding to marry a Philistine woman. God would have blessed him if he had lived a life of obedience to His commandments and doing His will. But instead he chose to despise the blessings of God and chose to enjoy but for a moment, the things of the world. The consequences of such a lifestyle are very sad indeed of which we shall see more of in the next two chapters.

Willful behaviour is a very serious sin. The consequences of such a sin are often life changing.

The hurt and damage done to one's life are incalculable. Professing Christians must take note of such grave sins. To do any less is foolhardy. It is suicidal to one's witness when caution is thrown to the wind with impunity in the manner in which Samson allowed his lust of a woman to destroy him.

His parents were wrong to condone their son's rebellion and disobedience. They should not have accompanied him to "get" his wife! They ought to have castigated him and remained adamant in their disapproval of his desire of the Philistine woman. Their weakness and failure compounded Samson's sins ultimately resulting in his blindness and death. AMEN

**DAILY READINGS & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

**Daily Readings**

**MONDAY:** Judges 14:1-9; Deuteronomy 7:3-4.

**TUESDAY:** Judges 14:10-20; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18.

**WEDNESDAY:** Judges 14:1-20.

**THURSDAY:** Judges 14:1-20.

**FRIDAY:** Judges 14:1-20.

**Discussion Questions**

1. How important is the doctrine of unequally yoke taught in the Bible? If the pastor witnesses the daughter's wedding, which is unequally yoked and signs the register at the ROM albeit no church wedding would that be acceptable to you?

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2. Would you attend the wedding of your son or daughter if they were going to be unequally yoke? To what length would you go to discourage them? Would you give in? By attending the wedding dinner paid for by the in-law side would that constitute giving in and condoning their unequally yoke marriage?

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3. What is the biblical behaviour and attitude to the son or daughter-in-law now that they are married albeit it was an unequally yoke marriage? Will you receive them into your home and kiss and make up? Explain your answer.

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4. What specific action does the Spirit of God accomplish in Chapter 14:6 and 19? What is the meaning of the phrase “the Spirit of the LORD came upon him”? Does that imply salvation?

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6. What can you learn from the different responses of Manoah and his wife to the Angel of the LORD’S appearance?

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5. What contradictory elements in Samson’s character can you detect in Chapter 14?