

From Judges to Jesus – Part 4

Since we have been studying the book of Judges, you will notice that there is a stark contrast between the Lord's ability to deliver Israel from sin and oppression and Israel's ability to deliver itself – this includes subtle references to Jewish feasts of deliverance in the background of each story. Comparing Passover and the Feast of Tabernacles/Booths, to the manner in which the deliverance is carried out by certain individuals we have looked at so far, you see a very at times dark picture. The same is true of Israel's next deliverer.

Israel's next flawed deliverer is Samson, who we are introduced to in Chapter 13. Samson's father's name is Manoah, which means "resting place", "finality", "victory", "salvation" – the Lord comes to Manoah to begin to bring about deliverance; Manoah's wife is barren so the miracle child, Samson, will come and bring about deliverance. The Angel of the Lord comes down to prophesy to his parents about him (**Judges 13:5**).

There is a theme of Pentecost (**Acts 2:1-4**) and deliverance in Samson's story; and, there are similarities between Samson and The Pentecost:

- The Spirit is moving.
- There is fire.
- There is a wheat harvest.
- There is an attempt at a covenant relationship with the Gentiles.

However Samson's Pentecost involves a strange and brutal turn of events:

- The attempt to take a Gentile bride ends in disaster (**Judges 15:1-2**)
- The Spirit-filled Samson sends fire against the Philistines, who reply with fire themselves (**Judges 15:4-6**).
- Rather than 3,000 Israelites being saved as in Acts 2, Samson slays 3,000 Philistines, who are drunk, but not with the Holy Spirit – they were killed because of their sin.

Sin will cause you to objectify people in order to satisfy your carnal desires; we see this in how Samson goes after a woman to be his wife – in this situation Samson is operating based on appearance and for his own personal interest, not on principle or for the greater good (**Judges 14:1-3**):

- The Philistines are unclean, uncircumcised people who have no covenant relationship with God.
- Samson wants a wife for his benefit and not for her benefit.
- It's not about what is best for her but rather what he feels will benefit him the most and what will make him happy.
- He is living for his benefit and not for her or her people's benefit.
- He is selfishly motivated.

This is in stark contrast to the fact that the salvation from sins and right standing we have with God through Jesus is because He loves us and did everything for our welfare:

- Jesus had our well-being in mind.
- Jesus had our wellness in mind.
- Jesus had our wholeness in mind.
- Jesus laid down His life for our welfare!

Jesus is God’s provision for us of a final, victorious resting place from sin.

Jesus is the miracle child: He is the greater Samson who has come to be the deliverer of our salvation and our resting place from sin and the judgment of God.

- You can be at peace in Him today.
- The trauma of sin and darkness must yield to Him.
- He is your wholeness today.
- He is where sin and brokenness die.

We also see another example of not only Samson’s disregard for other people but his blatant disregard for God’s law: he sins by touching the dead carcass of an animal with paws, and causes his parents to unknowingly sin; he callously implicates his parents in defilement: his parents sanctified him, but now he desecrates them (**Judges 14:6-9**).

Unfortunately, Samson’s parents fail to remember the encounter they had with the Angel of the Lord; they fail to remind Samson of the Divine call on his life; they don’t speak of the call to deliver Israel; they do not speak the word of God and remind him of how sinful it would be to marry outside Israel to a people who are not in covenant with God; and, they fail to remind him of the appointed Word he is to live out. So, Samson, like the rest of Israel, is being led exclusively on the basis of his senses. What we see in Samson is the condition of Israel as the darkness of sin overtakes its heart condition. Israel has no regard for what it means to be called by God’s name and follow God’s laws. We have this same mindset in 2021: we are led by our senses and determine what is righteous and unrighteous in our own sight; we don’t go to Scripture, rather we lean on our own personal truth – it becomes My Truth vs. God’s Truth; cultural trends vs. the unchanging, unshakeable character of God. We are born with a sinful nature that must be confronted daily by the power of the death and Resurrection of Jesus in our lives. We must remember that where sin abounds, His grace abounds much greater.

Question for reflection: What type of fire is coming from your life – one that burns others? Or, one that attracts others?