

## THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

### Judges And Ruth: Personal Blessing Amid Group Apostasy

#### Part II: History Of The Era Of The Judges

#### B. The Record Of Specific Judges, Judges 3:7-16:31

#### 12. Samson's Judgeship, Judges 14:1-16:31

#### a. God's Use Of And Samson's Blessing Loss In His Lustful Break Of Part Of His Nazirite Vow (Judges 14:1-20)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

In today's world, God lets many people express sinful lusts that are self-destructive and lack His blessing:

(1) God lets people in business express the self-destructive lust for money: Stephanie Armour and Jonathan D. Rockoff's story, "Shkreli Takes Fifth Before Congress" in The Wall Street Journal, February 5, 2016, p. B1, told how "(f)ormer pharmaceutical executive Martin Shkreli . . . prompted a public outcry . . . for raising the price of a lifesaving medication" with "a 50-fold increase," and Congress has responded by investigating him.

(2) God lets people in politics express the self-destructive lust for money: an editorial in the same paper (Ibid., "Hillary's Wall Street Reckoning," p. A10) claimed, "The flood of money to [Mrs.] Clinton . . . out of Wall Street" is why "no one believes her when she talks about breaking up banks and jailing their employees." (brackets ours)

(3) God lets famous people indulge in lusts that lead to self-destruction: (a) Supermodel Stephanie Seymour, known for her appearances in Victoria Secret ads and Sports Illustrated swimwear issues, was arrested on January 15, 2016 in Greenwich, Connecticut for Driving Under the Influence (online.com, January 18, 2016) (b) Comedian Bill Cosby, the one-time America's Dad of television fame, is facing prosecution for "allegedly drugging and sexually assaulting a former Temple University employee" following a recent ruling by a judge. (Ibid., The Wall Street Journal, Kate King, "Ruling Lets Cosby Case Proceed," February 4, 2016, p. A2).

(4) God lets people at the local level express self-destructive lust: former secretary of labor, Treasury and state George P. Shultz in an op-ed, "We Cut Smoking, Why Not Drug Use?" (Ibid., February 10, 2016, p. A13) told of "an epidemic in the use of heroin in New Hampshire . . . especially" among "young people." Use of this drug is damaging "their brains and their bodies," and at our last Thanksgiving Eve Service, two young adults told me that several youth in the area had died of overdoses of heroin.

Need: *So we ask, "Why does God let so much lust be expressed that is self-destructive and misses His blessing?"*

#### I. **Though God handed Samson the enabling as a lifelong Nazirite to start to free Israel from Philistine rule with blessing, He still let Samson indulge in lust in Judges 14:1-20, breaking most of his Nazirite vow:**

- A. The Lord had required that Samson be a Nazirite from the womb, separated unto God from the sinful world throughout his life that God's Spirit might use him in battle to deliver Israel from the Philistines, Jud. 13:4-5.
- B. A Nazirite was required of God (1) to avoid partaking of grapes, (2) to avoid defiling himself by touching a dead body (2) and to avoid cutting his hair while under his vow as a Nazirite, Numbers 6:1-8.
- C. Nevertheless, Samson soon violated two of these rules while indulging in a life of sinful lust, Judges 14:1-11:
  1. As a young man, Samson one day walked 4 miles to Timnath in Philistine country (Jud. 14:1; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, ftn. to Jud. 14:1) where he saw (*ra'ah*, Kittel, Bib. Heb., p. 390; B. D. B., A Heb.-Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 906-909) a Philistine woman, and as parents then arranged weddings (Gen. 21:21; B. K. C., O. T., p. 405), Samson returned home to ask his parents to acquire her to be his wife, Judges 14:1-2.
  2. The Mosaic Law forbade Israelites from marrying such Gentiles (Exodus 34:16 Ibid.), so Samson's parents asked him why he did not want to get a wife from Israel that he not wed a vile Philistine, Judges 14:3a.
  3. Samson told his father that he wanted him to acquire her for him, for she pleased (*yashar*, Ibid., B. D. B., p. 448) him, so Samson's expressed lust of his eyes was behind his desire for this woman, Judges 14:3b.
  4. His parents were understandably upset over Samson's choice, but they went with him down to Timnath to arrange for the marriage based only on Samson's lust of his eyes for this woman, Judges 14:5a.
  5. On the way, Samson left his parents likely to eat grapes at a vineyard in violation his Nazirite vow (Ibid., B. K. C., O. T.; Jud. 14:5b), and there a "young lion" (*kepir*, Ibid., B. D. B., p. 498) known for youthful strength roared against him, Jud. 14:5b. The Spirit of God came mightily on him and he tore the lion probably in of the way that "Near-Easterners rend a young goat, pulling it in half by the hind legs," Judges 14:6a; Ibid., B. K. C., O. T., p. 405. Samson had no tool in his hands, and he did not tell his parents about the event likely to avoid telling them that he met the lion en route to eating prohibited grapes, Jud. 14:6b.

6. Samson then met and talked with the woman he wanted to marry, and she still pleased him (Jud. 14:7), so after a time and in accord with marital customs, he returned to Timnath of consummate his marriage, but briefly turned aside to see what had happened to the carcass of the lion that he had slain, Judges 14:8a.
7. He found a swarm of bees in the lion, and, violating his Nazirite vow with a lust for the honey, he reached into the body to take of the bees' honey and went on his way eating, taking some to his parents without saying where he got it as he likely hid from them this violation of his Nazirite vow, Jud. 14:8b-9; Ibid.
8. When his father came down to Timnath for the wedding, Samson made a seven-day feast that included the drinking of wine made from grapes, so he then violated a second part of his Nazirite vow, Jud. 14:10; Ibid.
9. At the feast, Samson also proposed a riddle about his acquisition of the honey from the lion's body, offering to reward the thirty friends of the bridegroom the Philistines had provided (Ibid.) with thirty festal garments and undergarments were they to give him the answer to his riddle, Judges 14:11-13; Ibid.
10. The Philistines secretly threatened Samson's bride with death by fire for her and her father if she did not entice him to give her the answer, so she nagged Samson for it until he told it to her, Jud. 14:14-17; Ibid.
11. When the Philistines heard the answer to the riddle from Samson's bride and told it to him, he realized they had pressured his bride for the answer, so he went 23 miles down to Ashkelon of the Philistines and by the power of God's Spirit, he slew thirty Philistines there, took their garments back to Timnath to give to the friends of the bridegroom and in fury went back home without consummating his marriage, Jud. 14:18-19.

**II. Thus, God sovereignly, graciously used Samson to achieve His will in helping Israel start to become liberated from Philistine rule in spite of Samson's indulgence in lusts, but Samson paid a steep price in a lack of personal blessing due to his choice to indulge in sinful lust instead of obeying God, Judges 14:20:**

- A. Regardless of his expressions of lust and his two violations of his Nazirite vow in trying to obtain a Philistine wife, God's Spirit still graciously, greatly enabled Samson to slay a lion and kill 30 Philistines, Jud. 14:6, 19.
- B. God's reason for thus using Samson regardless of his choice to live in sinful lust was His plan to use Samson to slay many Philistines that God might thus start delivering Israel from Philistine oppression, Judges 14:4.
- C. However, Samson's disobedience to God in choosing a Philistine bride and his acts of sinful lust led to his great loss of blessing: failing to consummate his marriage in fury over his interactions with the Philistines who pressured his bride to nag him for the answer to his riddle led the Philistines to think Samson did not want his bride, so they gave her to his best man. Samson thus did not obtain the wife he had desired, Judges 14:20, 1-2.

***Lesson:*** *Though God sovereignly equipped Samson to achieve His purpose to start delivering Israel from Philistine domination, He gave Samson the liberty either to heed His Biblical will apart from indulging in lusts that he might experience God's rich personal blessing or to indulge in sinful lusts to his self-destructive loss of God's blessing.*

***Application:*** *If tempted to indulge in self-destructive sinful lusts, (1) may we trust in Christ to be saved (John 3:16) and be indwelt by the Holy Spirit to be enabled to live righteously, Romans 8:9b; Galatians 5:16. (2) May we then rely in a life of faith on the Holy Spirit for the power to live righteously apart from lust (Galatians 5:16) that God might both fulfill His sovereign will in our lives while also richly blessing us.*

**Conclusion:** (To illustrate the message . . .)

Some years ago, I knew a young Christian woman who was convinced that God wanted her to be a wife and a mother. However, she found herself in the awkward position of having a boyfriend that she had first thought was a Christian only later, when she had become emotionally attached to him, to realize he was unsaved. That was a troubling realization, for she knew that 2 Corinthians 6:14 taught believers should marry only believers.

She thus had a difficult decision to make: she could either violate Scripture by staying in a relationship with the boyfriend only eventually to marry him to keep her emotions from being hurt or to break her relationship with him in obedience to the Lord and trust God in time to provide someone else who was Biblically qualified for her to wed.

She decided to trust God and make the emotionally hard move of breaking her relationship with her boyfriend. This step understandably proved to be quite painful, but she courageously took this step as an act of faith in the Lord.

In time, God richly rewarded her. He led her to marry a committed Christian man and be very blessed in her marriage and family life. For choosing to live above lust and even immediate emotional gratification to heed the Word of God, what Samson had failed to do, this woman saw God fulfill her heart's desire with His blessing.

**May we trust in Christ for salvation. Then, may we rely on the indwelling Holy Spirit to AVOID sinful lusts that we obtain God's richest blessings in our lives.**