

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

b God's Warning For Samson To Heed Him For Future Blessing

(Judges 15:1-20)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

Seemingly unusually threatening events are cropping up around the world, causing many to wonder why:

(1) Our politics are full of such events: (a) Daniel Henninger's piece, "Electability on Steroids" in The Wall Street Journal, February 18, 2016, p. A11, held that "hours after Justice Scalia's death, Ted Cruz," a Republican who is running for president, "described the stakes: 'The two branches of government hang in the balance -- not just the president but the Supreme Court,'" and Mr. Henninger added that the "remark . . . was an understatement," for he "didn't mention holding control of the Senate" that confirms the presidential nominees to the Supreme Court.

(b) The events surrounding Justice Scalia's death itself raise concerns: The Washington Post cited William O. Ritchie, former head of criminal investigations for the Washington, D. C. police who asserted in a February 14, 2016 Facebook post: "As a former homicide commander, I am stunned that no autopsy was ordered for Justice Scalia." ("Confusion over Scalia's death stirs sideshow debate, conspiracy theories," FoxNews.com, February 16, 2016)

(c) Then, the voters are upset: Peggy Noonan claims, "We're in . . . a . . . kind of soft French Revolution . . . with the angry and blocked beginning to push hard against an oblivious elite" due to a "general decline of America's faith in its institutions." ("Trump, Sanders and the American Rebellion," Ibid., February 13-14, 2016, p. A11)

(2) Religious realms contain ominous events, too: (a) The editorial, "The Pope and the Presbyterian" (Ibid., February 19, 2016, p. A12) noted that when "(a) reporter asked Pope Francis about Donald Trump's pledge to build a wall" along the U. S. border, "he chose to question Donald Trump's faith," saying, "'A person who thinks only about building walls . . . and not . . . bridges is not Christian . . . this man is not Christian if he says things like that.'"

(b) This statement by the pope takes on greater significance if we consider the event reported in Brannon Howse's book, The Coming Religious Reich, 2015, p. 17-18, 23, in which even "conservative Bible teachers Tony Evans, David Jeremiah and Ravi Zacharias" met with "Roman Catholics" and others "in conjunction with the Glen Beck 'Restoring Love' gathering July 28 [2012] in Cowboy Stadium" in Dallas, laying "the groundwork . . . for 'evangelicals' to unite with Beck and others who espouse heretical teachings . . . for" the goal of "'reclaiming America.'" (brackets ours) Some evangelicals may thus think that these conservative Bible teachers believe that those who favor Mr. Trump's view of building a wall along the border will thereby not go to heaven since these teachers have met with Catholics, and the pope who has condemned Mr. Trump's view on the wall is their spiritual leader!

(c) What stuns me is noting that one of the conservative Bible teachers was a seminary classmate of mine!

Need: *So we ask, "If we witness unusually threatening events, why, and what does God want us to do about it?!"*

I. Samson faced an intense, life-threatening thirst following a great battle he had won in Judges 15:18.

II. God allowed this ominous event to occur in his life to jar Samson to repent of his life of sin and lust:

- A. We learned in our last message that Samson had early in his ministry violated two of his Nazirite vow's rules, threatening the withdrawal of God's blessing of equipping him to defeat the Philistines, Judges 13:1-14:20:
1. God had arranged for Samson to be equipped by Him with great physical strength to defeat Philistines providing Samson kept his lifelong Nazirite vow of being consecrated to the Lord, Judges 13:1-5, 24.
 2. That Biblical Nazirite vow involved Samson's observing three prohibitions -- (1) not partaking of grapes, (2) not touching a dead body and (3) not cutting his hair, Numbers 6:1-8.
 3. However, as we learned in our last message, early in his ministry, Samson violated two such rules in sin and lust: (1) he ate honey from the carcass of a lion (Jud. 14:5-9) to gratify the lust of the flesh, (2) he drank wine at a wedding feast to gratify the same lust when he wed a Philistine girl in violation of Exodus 34:16, a woman he desired by the lust of his eyes, Jud. 14:1-2, 10; B. K. C., O. T., p. 405; 1 John 2:15-16.
 4. God still graciously enabled Samson to kill 30 Philistines to pay off a wager he had lost, Judges 14:11-19.
- B. Nevertheless, Samson kept living in sin and lust as God graciously kept helping him, Judges 15:1-14:
1. Samson returned to Timnath to visit his Philistine bride only to learn that she had been given to his best man (Jud. 15:1-2), so he violated Deuteronomy 32:35 in taking his own revenge: he caught 300 foxes (or

- jackals, *Ibid.*, p. 406), tied them two-at-a-time by their tails, set their tails on fire and released them in the Philistine grain fields, burning their fields, harvested grain shocks, vineyards and olive groves, Jud. 15:3-5.
2. The Philistines retaliated, burning Samson's bride and her father to death, so he viciously killed many of them ("leg on thigh" is "a wrestling metaphor for a ferocious attack," *Ibid.*) and went to Judah, Jud. 15:6-8.
 3. This event in turn brought the Philistine army out against Judah (Judges 15:9), so the men of Judah chose to try to turn Samson over to the Philistines to avoid fighting the feared Philistines, Judges 15:10-12a.
 4. Samson agreed for his countrymen to bind him to turn him over to the Philistines if he did not have to fight and slay Judah's men (Jud. 15:12b-13a), so they bound him to deliver him to the Philistines, Jud. 15:13b.
 5. When the Philistines shouted at seeing Samson bound and being delivered to them (Jud. 15:14a), the Spirit of God came mightily on him, and the ropes dropped off his hands as if they were burnt flax, Jud. 15:14b.
- C. However, Samson then violated his Nazirite vow even in how he served the Lord, for he picked up a freshly dead donkey's jawbone in violation of a Nazirite vow rule to use in killing 1,000 Philistines, Judges 15:15-17:
1. Spotting a dead donkey's jawbone, Samson picked it up to use in killing 1,000 Philistines, Judges 15:15.
 2. He then voiced a saying about the feat, using a play on words where "heaps" and "donkey" are homonyms, *hamor* in both cases (B. D. B., *A Heb.-Eng. Lex. of the O. T.*, p. 331). He may also have had meant that the "heaps," *hamor*, of Philistines he'd made into "donkeys," *hamor*, in mockery of them! Jud. 15:16 NIV
- D. Thus, though God had given Samson great victories in spite of his sin and lust, the Lord was displeased at his use of a donkey's jawbone to gain the victory in violation of his Nazirite vow. Thus, God let Samson then experience a life-threatening weakness: He left him with a great thirst after his battle, what would lead to his death at the hands of still-living Philistines *IF Samson did not get God's help*, Judges 15:17-18.
- III. In desperation, Samson then did what he had not yet done in his life -- he called on the Lord for help, and God miraculously provided a permanent spring of water nearby, evidence of His ongoing blessings were Samson to look to Him for blessing and heed Him in avoiding sin and lust and keeping his Nazirite vow, Jud. 15:18-19. [The KJV at Jud. 15:19 claims God opened the jawbone to produce the spring, but this translation errs: the Hebrew word *lehi* can mean not only "jawbone," but the TOWN of "Jawbone," or "Lehi," *Ibid.*, B. K. C., O. T. Since this spring was still in the area when the book of Judges was later written (Judges 15:19), the author of Judges meant the TOWN of Lehi by his use of *lehi* in Judges 15:19.]**
- IV. For a while at least, Samson relied on God for His blessing, judging Israel for 20 years, Judges 15:20.**

Lesson: *God let Samson experience a life-threatening vulnerability of extreme thirst following a great victory that he might recall his need to rely on the Lord for blessing, thus starting to live uprightly and keep his Nazirite vow.*

Application: *If events occur that seem threatening, (1) may we trust in Christ to be saved, John 3:16. (2) Then, may we (a) view the threatening events as God's "wake up call" (b) to examine ourselves to see if we heed His Word, and, if not, (b) to revere the Lord, (c) to part from sin and lust (d) and to trust and (e) heed Him for blessing.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

In our introduction, we noted that Brannon Howse's work, The Coming Religious Reich told of "conservative Bible teachers" who met with Catholics in a gathering that laid the groundwork for evangelicals to unite with heretical leaders to "reclaim America," and how stunned I was to read that one such teacher was a seminary classmate of mine! We also noted how Pope Francis charged Donald Trump of being "not Christian" for proposing a wall along the U. S. border to keep out illegal immigrants, and how some may think even conservative Bible teachers hold the pope's view that favoring a wall on the border makes one not a Christian as they have met with Catholics who are led by the pope.

I see this ominous issue as a **"wake up" call from the Lord to stick close to Scripture!** In doing so, (1) we note that the Bible in John 3:36 KJV claims, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." According to Scripture, then, what makes one a Christian is his faith in Jesus Christ as Savior from sin and hell -- not some political view about a wall on the border!

(2) We also know that the Roman Catholic Church teaches salvation by faith plus works in its Council of Trent (Session VI, Jan. 1547, "On Justification," cited in Henry Bettenson, Docs. of the Christ. Chch., 1966, p. 370-371), and Galatians 1:8-9 with 3:2-3 and Ephesians 2:8-9 call us to avoid fellowship with those who teach this. Thus, the conservative Bible teachers who met with Roman Catholics in the Glen Beck gathering erred in doing so.

(3) Thus, salvation is by faith in Christ, not due to some political view about a wall along the U. S. border!

May we trust in Christ to be saved. Then, may we respond to unusually ominous events we see by resolving anew to trust the Lord and heed His Word for blessing versus living careless lives in sinful lusts.