

JUDGES AND RUTH: FACING GROUP APOSTASY AS INDIVIDUALS

Part X: Learning To Heed The Lord To Enjoy His Power In Living

(Judges 13-16)

I. Introduction

- A. Ephesians 1:15-19 tells us God has infinite spiritual power directed toward us.
- B. However, we believers may wonder if all of that power is directed toward us, why then do we not see it portrayed in areas where we often experience spiritual weakness or failure in life and service!
- C. Judges 13-16 tells of the life of Israel's judge, Samson, a life that answers this need with helpful insight!

II. Learning To Heed The Lord To Enjoy His Power In Living, Judges 13-16.

- A. God planned for Samson to enjoy the Holy Spirit's power for physical prowess to defeat the Philistines:
 - 1. Samson was to be set apart unto the Lord from birth as a Nazarite; he would not be allowed to drink any strong drink, or cut his hair or touch a dead body all of his life, Judges 13:4-5a; Numbers 6:3-6.
 - 2. In thus being separated unto the Lord, Samson would begin to deliver the people of Israel from the Philistines, Judges 13:5b. We know from Judges 14:6 et al. this would involve Samson's being empowered by the Holy Spirit of God to work superhuman physical exploits to defeat the Philistines.
- B. Yet, Samson's **life** shows he had to **learn** the **hard** way to **heed** God to **enjoy** His **power**, 14:1-16:31:
 - 1. Early in his ministry, Samson was used of God even though he selfishly and errantly married a Gentile:
 - a. Samson started to disobey God by desiring to marry a Gentile, Judges 14:1-3 with Exodus 34:16.
 - b. Though this move disheartened his parents, God allowed it to bring Samson into conflict with the Philistines so the Lord could begin to destroy them through Samson, Judges 14:4.
 - c. Accordingly, God's spiritual power equipped Samson to destroy a young lion that rose up to oppose him so Samson could make contact with the Philistines, Judges 14:5-7.
 - 2. Then, God graciously used Samson though he had violated two of his Nazarite restrictions, 14:8-16:15:
 - a. Samson took honey from a lion's carcass and drank wine with the Philistines, Judges 14:8-10. The word for "feast" in verse 10 is *mishteh*, the Hebrew word for a "drinking party," cf. Bible Knowledge Com., O.T., p. 4-5; Kittel, ed., Biblia Hebraica, p. 391. Thus, he violated **two** of his three Nazarite vow restrictions very early in his ministry.
 - b. Yet, he still kept his third obligation -- not cutting his hair, so God **graciously** provided Samson with the strength to perform heroic deeds in conflict with the Philistines, Judges 14:11-16:15: (a) God gave Samson the power to slay 30 Philistines to provide spoil to keep his word regarding a wager he had made regarding a riddle, 14:11-19. (b) God provided Samson with the power to capture 300 foxes, tie their tails together, light them and release them in the Philistines' grain fields for their failing to give him his wife, Judges 14:20-15:5a. This destroyed their grain fields along with their vineyards and olive orchards, 14:5b! (c) God gave Samson the power to defeat many Philistines who gathered to get vengeance for this crop destruction, 15:6-8. (d) The Lord then gave Samson the power to destroy 1,000 Philistines who waged war on Israel in answer to his former slaughter of their men, 15:9-15. (e) God graciously provided water so he could revive from his battle fatigue, 15:16-20 NIV. (f) God graciously provided Samson the power to carry off a heavy city gate 38 miles "mostly uphill" even though it followed his sinful and physically draining affair with a Gentile harlot, 16:1-3 and Ex. 34:16; Deut. 22:28-29; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, fn. to Judges 16:3. (g) God graciously provided Samson the might to escape the Philistines though he repeatedly toyed with telling them about the real reason for his strength in his uncut hair, Judges 16:4-15.
 - 3. When Samson let the Philistines know about his hair, and it was cut, God's power was removed, and Samson fell to the power of the Philistines to his physical and mental pain, Judges 16:16-21.
 - 4. Nevertheless, when he repented and his hair began to grow, God heard his prayer for strength, and he slew more of the Philistines (including their lords) in his death than he had in his life, Judges 16:22-31.

Lesson: *Samson accomplished more in his death than he had in his life since, through the pain he suffered due to his own spiritual defeat, he learned FULLY to obey the Lord and submit to His Word.*

Application: *Thus, the only limit to the power of God in our lives and ministries is our degree of obedience to His Word. May we then learn from Samson's life to OBEY God fully from the START!*