

SAMSON—PART 2

Judges 13–16

WORST OF THE JUDGES

- the spiritual quality of Israel and the quality of the judges declines as the Book of Judges progresses: they mirror each other
- Gideon is the turning point between the best (Othniel, Ehud, Deborah-Barak) and worst judges (Abimelech, Jephthah, Samson)

NAZIRITE

- he was divinely chosen to be "a Nazirite to God from the womb to the day of his death" (Judg 13:7; cf. 13:4–5, 14; 16:17)
 - Nazirite vows were usually voluntary and made for a limited period of time (Num 6); except, however, for life-long Nazirites chosen or accepted by God before they were born—Samson, Samuel (1 Sam 1:11), and John the Baptist (Luke 1:15)
 - three restrictions: Nazirites may not (1) consume grape products or alcoholic beverages, (2) cut their hair, or (3) touch dead bodies (Num 6:3–8)—they took "a vow of separation to the LORD" (6:2) that regulated their diet, appearance, and associations
- he violated all three: touched a dead lion (14:8, 9), apparently drank wine (*mishteh* 14:10), and allowed his hair to be cut (16:19)
- he also violated the Nazirite principle of being holy to the LORD by his immoral conduct with a harlot in Gaza and with Delilah

HOLY SPIRIT

- the ministry of the Spirit was the source of his great strength and empowered him to defeat the Philistines (Judg 14:5–6, 19; 15:14–17; ; cf. 15:8; 16:3, 9, 12, 14, 19–20, 28–30)
 - the presence of the Spirit did not depend on his personal holiness (Judg 16:1–3, 4–14)
 - the presence of the Spirit was not something he sensed or felt moment by moment (Judg 16:20)

SUCCESSSES

- pattern of success-failure in the 6 episodes of chapters 14–16: a Philistine success followed by a disaster caused by Samson
 - Episode 1 (14:5–20), Episode 2 (15:1–6a), Episode 3 (15:6b–8), Episode 4 (15:9–17), Episode 5 (16:1–3), Episode 6 (16:4–30)
 - his two prayers were answered at the point where he appears defeated (Judg 15:18–19; 16:28–30)

JUDGE

- his position as a judge was secured by the Battle of Jawbone Hill (Judg 15:9–20)
- he seems to have acted wisely as a judge for the tribes of Dan and Judah for twenty years (Judg 15:20; 16:31)

SUICIDE

- five suicides are mentioned in the Bible: Abimelech (Judg 9:50–55), Samson (Judg 16:28–31), Saul and his armor bearer (1 Sam 31:1–6), and Judas Iscariot (Matt 27:3–5; Acts 1:18)
 - the prohibition against murder (sixth commandment) applies to self-murder—to suicide (Exod 20:13; Deut 5:17)
- two stone pillar bases placed only a yard apart were discovered in the ruins of the first Philistine temple ever found in Palestine—in 1972 at Tell Qasile
 - he killed more Philistines in his death than he killed in his life (compare Judg 14:19; 15:9, 15 with 16:27, 30)
 - it was the absence of the LORD and not the power of Dagon that accounted for Samson's shame (Judg 16:19–20)
 - in his death he made known the impotence of Dagon and the power of the LORD
- suicide does not annul your salvation: after committing suicide Saul joined Samuel in Paradise (1 Sam 28:19; cf. Rom 8:38–39)

HALL OF FAME (HEBREWS 11:32)

- he was not excluded because of his immorality, nor included because of his feats of strength: he was included because his faith was great: by faith he went out alone to fight and trusted the Spirit to rush upon and strengthen him in his time of need