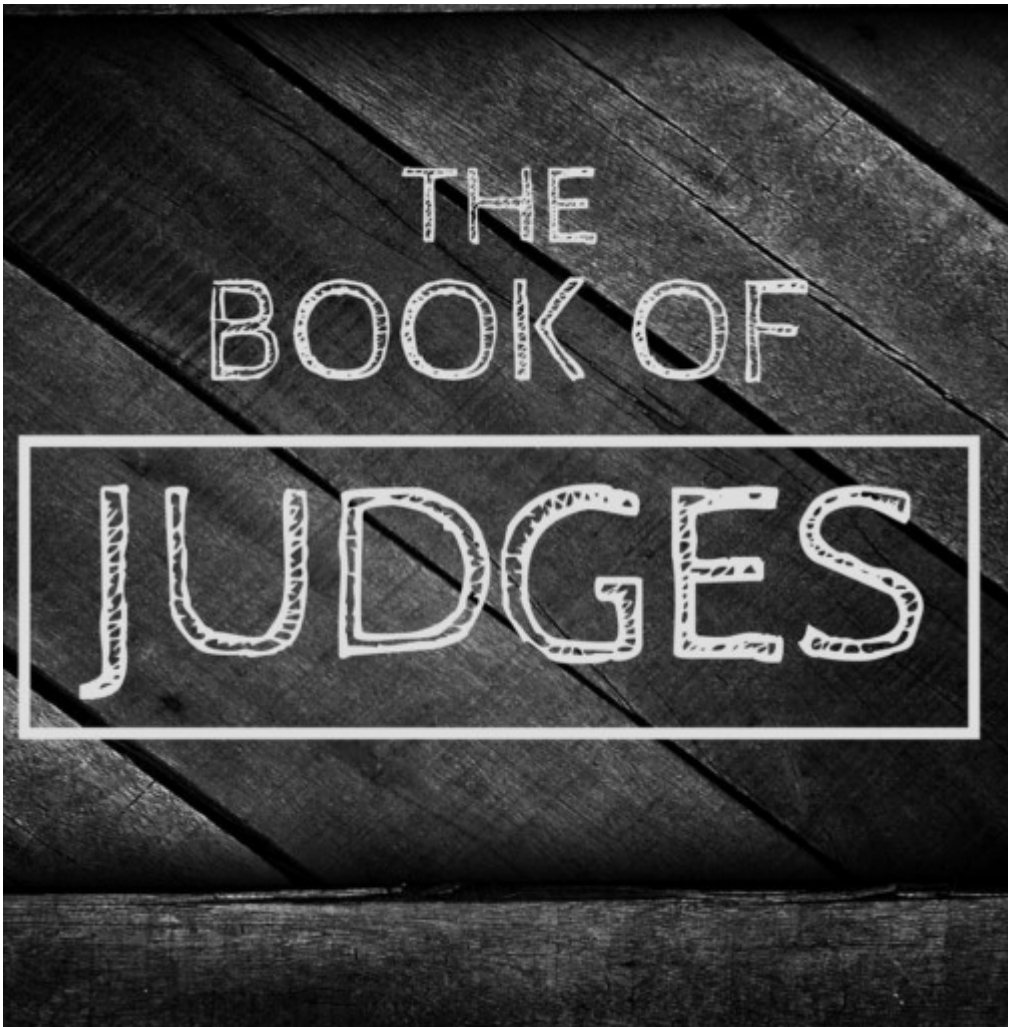


Let's Worship God

2nd-7th May 2022
Judges



JUDGES

Monday - Judges 15:1-3 - Dishonoring Marriage

We have noted before that marriage as God created it was often dishonored in this period. The judges Gideon, Jair, Ibzan, and Abdon likely took many wives. Jephthah's mother was not his father's wife. Last week we read of the confused way in which Samson viewed marriage, putting his parents ahead of his wife. The Philistines threatened his wife into betraying her husband, and she, rather than confiding in Samson, tricked him into giving her the answer to his riddle. Enraged at the Philistines, Samson did not return to his wife after his mighty deed, but went to his parents' home instead. Lastly, when Samson did not return, his father-in-law unlawfully gave his wife in marriage to another man.

Now, when Samson's temper has cooled, he goes to his wife with a gift of a young goat. However, he finds that she is now illegally living as the wife of another man. In order to placate Samson, his father-in-law tries to give his wife's younger sister to him in marriage, rather than admit his wrongdoing and the unlawful character of Samson's wife's marriage to a second husband. Samson is rightly angered at this. He blames the Philistines, in general, for this situation. Their general disregard of the sanctity of marriage and the wickedness of their culture has been evident in this entire episode. Whereas he may have previously considered himself partly to blame for the situation involving his riddle, he considers himself the innocent victim in this matter, and feels justified in taking vengeance on the Philistines.

In Judges 14 and 15, we see the kind of chaos we can create when we fail to honor marriage as God created it. It is a union between one man and one woman that lasts as long as both are alive, except in certain cases of extreme sin on the part of one spouse against the other (Matthew 19:9, I Corinthians 7:15).

Questions

1. When God created marriage, how many wives did He give to Adam?
2. Why is it so important that we honor marriage as God created it?

Prayer Points

1. Pray that marriage be held in honor by all.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

"And he found a fresh jawbone of a donkey, and put out his hand and took it, and with it he struck 1,000 men." Judges 15:15

Praise: Psalm 85 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

JUDGES

Tuesday - Judges 15:1-5 - Samson's Revenge

The events surrounding Samson's marriage to a Philistine woman have convinced him of the wicked nature of Philistine culture, in general. He does not simply blame his father-in-law that his wife has been given to another man, he blames all Philistines. At the wheat harvest (which took place in the spring), the Philistine men would likely be hard at work, and less likely to notice what Samson was doing. Moreover, the wheat in the fields would have been quite dry. Samson catches three-hundred foxes (an impressive feat itself) and, tying two foxes together at the tail, binds a torch between each pair. Lighting the torches, he sets the foxes loose in the Philistine fields. 150 pairs of foxes, dragging 150 torches are likely to run quickly, burning many fields of standing grain in very little time. Furthermore, Samson also sets fire to other fields, as well as the already harvested grain and the olive orchards. This would have been an enormous economic loss to the Philistines.

Clearly, Samson has a hot temper. When he takes offense, he becomes very angry and takes that anger out on his enemies swiftly and on a large scale. We must keep in mind that, while we ordinarily ought to avoid such heights of temper ourselves, the LORD is using Samson as the means of His deliverance of His people. God's wrath against sin is just, and He has the right to judge sin whenever and however He chooses. Samson is God's chosen instrument to pour out wrath on the Philistines, and He uses both the good and bad qualities of Samson's personality to bring that about.

Questions

1. Why is it helpful for us to know this happened during the wheat harvest?
2. What made Samson's actions so damaging to the Philistines?
3. How is God using Samson's temper?

Prayer Points

1. Praise God that He is just.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

"And he found a fresh jawbone of a donkey, and put out his hand and took it, and with it he struck 1,000 men." Judges 15:15

Praise: Psalm 86 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

JUDGES

Wednesday - Judges 15:6-8 - Murder

Samson has done great damage to the Philistines, having burned much of their grain as well as their olive orchards. The Philistines consider this a great crime against them, but rather than seeking justice against the perpetrator, Samson, they blame his wife and father-in-law. So, instead of pursuing Samson, they murder Samson's wife and her father, burning them alive. This only further enrages Samson. His wrath may well have been satisfied with burning the Philistines' crops, but now he will take further action against them. He wanted his wife back, but the Philistines murdered her. Therefore, he swears to take vengeance on them. He strikes them "hip and thigh with a great blow." To strike someone "hip and thigh" is a figure of speech meaning "with great strength and in a fierce manner." As the hip and thigh have some of the largest muscles in the body, to strike "hip and thigh" is to strike an exceedingly strong blow. The Scripture is telling us that Samson attacked the Philistines with great violence, before fleeing to the land of Judah to hide in a cave at Etam.

In their pursuit of justice for a crime, people can often be very unjust. We often seek someone to blame, whether they deserve it or not. The Philistines failed to notice two things: 1) Samson's anger was against all of them, not just his father-in-law. It was Philistine society, in general, that had roused Samson's ire. 2) If they wanted to punish someone for the burning of their crops, Samson should have been the one they prosecuted, not his wife and father-in-law. We must take great care, when we believe we have been wronged, to pursue justice, and not simply to blame someone in order to have someone to blame. We must also be willing to consider if our own choices and behavior may have contributed to a difficult situation.

Questions

1. Why do the Philistines murder Samson's wife and father-in-law?
2. Whom should they have pursued?

Prayer Points

1. Ask God to help us make wise and just choices.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

"And he found a fresh jawbone of a donkey, and put out his hand and took it, and with it he struck 1,000 men." Judges 15:15

Praise: Psalm 87 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

JUDGES

Thursday - Judges 15:9-13 - Samson and the Men of Judah

Word has apparently spread that Samson is taking refuge in the cave at Etam in the land of Judah. In pursuit of him, a Philistine army encamps in Judah at a nearby hill. The men of Judah fear this armed force has come to punish them for some rebellious act, and send a delegation to the Philistines to ask why they have come. When the Philistines answer that they have come in pursuit of Samson, the Judahites send three-thousand men to capture Samson, lest the Philistines punish them for harboring an enemy. When they give Samson their word that they will not harm him, he allows them to bind him and turn him over to the Philistines.

There are several things of note in this passage. First, the men of Judah are fearful of the Philistines. They are afraid of what the Philistines, who rule over them, will do if Samson, their brother Israelite, is not handed over to the enemy. Second, the men of Judah fear Samson. They send three thousand men to capture one man. Third, the Philistines are fearful of Samson. They send an army to capture one man, and then make the men of Judah go get him. Fourth, Samson is not interested in fighting his brother Israelites. He allows the Judahites to bind him when they promise not to kill him. Finally, the LORD's sovereign will is that Samson fight the Philistines, not other Israelites. This situation could easily have escalated into a fight between Samson and the men of Judah who came to bind him, but it did not. God kept the peace between the men of Israel.

It is a great tragedy when God's people are opposed to one another. May the LORD keep the peace among His people.

Questions

1. How do we know the Philistines feared Samson?
2. How do we know the men of Judah feared Samson?
3. Why does Samson not fight the men of Judah?

Prayer Points

1. Implore the LORD to keep the peace among His people.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

"And he found a fresh jawbone of a donkey, and put out his hand and took it, and with it he struck 1,000 men." Judges 15:15

Praise: Psalm 88 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

JUDGES

Friday - Judges 15:14-17 - The Jawbone

As we saw yesterday, Samson allowed the men of Judah to bind him with two new ropes and deliver him to the Philistines encamped at a nearby hill. It seems the men of Judah leave Samson standing alone and bound with these ropes. The Philistines, thinking him vulnerable as he stands alone, hands and arms bound tightly, shout and rush at him either to capture or to kill him. However, the Spirit of the LORD again rushes upon Samson, empowering him for another great feat of strength. We are told the ropes "became as flax that has caught fire," meaning either that these two brand new ropes become miraculously as weak as burnt flax, or that Samson becomes so strong that he can break brand new ropes as if they are as weak as burnt flax. Either way, with his hands and arms now free, Samson is able to defend himself. Weaponless, he looks for anything he can use against the Philistines who are running at him. He quickly finds the jawbone of a donkey and uses it to kill one-thousand Philistines - a feat even greater than that of Shamgar (Judges 3:31). From this time on, the hill at which this occurred will be called "Ramath-lehi" meaning "hill of the jawbone".

Many people today enjoy comic books, film, television programs, etc. about "superheroes" - people who have amazing abilities due to a mutation of their genes or something else that makes them more powerful than an ordinary person. Unlike these fictional superheroes, Samson's amazing strength does not come from something within himself, but from the Holy Spirit. God, Himself, empowers Samson to do these great things in order to accomplish His plan for Samson's life. He also gives you the strength you need to accomplish His plan for your life. Though you may not think yourself as strong as Samson, if your faith is in Christ, it is the same Spirit who empowers you to do what He has called you to do (Romans 8:9-11).

Questions

1. How did Samson get free from the ropes?
2. How was he able to kill 1,000 Philistines with just a donkey's jawbone?
3. Who empowers you to accomplish God's plan for your life?

Prayer Points

1. Ask God for the strength to accomplish what He has called you to do.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

"And he found a fresh jawbone of a donkey, and put out his hand and took it, and with it he struck 1,000 men." Judges 15:15

Praise: Psalm 89 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

JUDGES

Saturday - Judges 15:18-20 - Water from God

After the great feat of slaying one-thousand armed Philistines with the jawbone of a donkey, Samson finds himself extremely thirsty. Here we find the first of only two times that the Bible records Samson calling upon the Lord. He acknowledges that it is God who has granted "this great salvation," and asks if he shall now die of thirst after being used so mightily by the Lord. The Lord graciously provides for Samson in his need. He splits open the hollow place at Lehi and water flows from it. (Some translations will say that God split open the hollow place in the jawbone, leading some to think it is the jawbone of the donkey itself from which Samson drinks. However, we need to remember that the Hebrew word for jawbone is "Lehi," which, from this time on, is also the name of the hill at which this event took place. Furthermore, verse 19 tells us that the spring from which Samson drinks is called "En-hakkore" meaning "spring of him who called" and "is at Lehi to this day." In other words, this is a spring in a hillside that was still giving water at the time the Book of Judges was written).

Here we see God graciously providing water when Samson needed it. In John 4:14, Jesus promises that He will provide His people with water that will become "a spring of water welling up to eternal life." In John 7:38, He says "Whoever believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water'." John tells us in the next verse that Jesus spoke these words about the Spirit whom those who believe in Jesus receive. As with Samson, God provides water for each of us who trust in Jesus Christ, but it is not merely the material water which only satisfies our thirst for a short time. It is the Holy Spirit, who satisfies our spiritual thirst and maintains our spiritual life continuously.

Questions

1. What does the Lord provide for believers in Jesus that is similar to the spring of water He provided for Samson?
2. Who is the "Living Water" of whom Jesus spoke?

Prayer Points

1. Pray for the preaching and hearing of God's Word tomorrow.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters

Memory Verse

"And he found a fresh jawbone of a donkey, and put out his hand and took it, and with it he struck 1,000 men." Judges 15:15

Praise: Psalm 90 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

The goal of Let's Worship God is to encourage and help you in your worship of God each day.

**God tells us that
Ezra read from
the book of the Law
day after day
and that
the people of God
were filled with joy!**

Let's Worship God is produced
by the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland.

If you have any queries please contact - rpchurchscotland@gmail.com