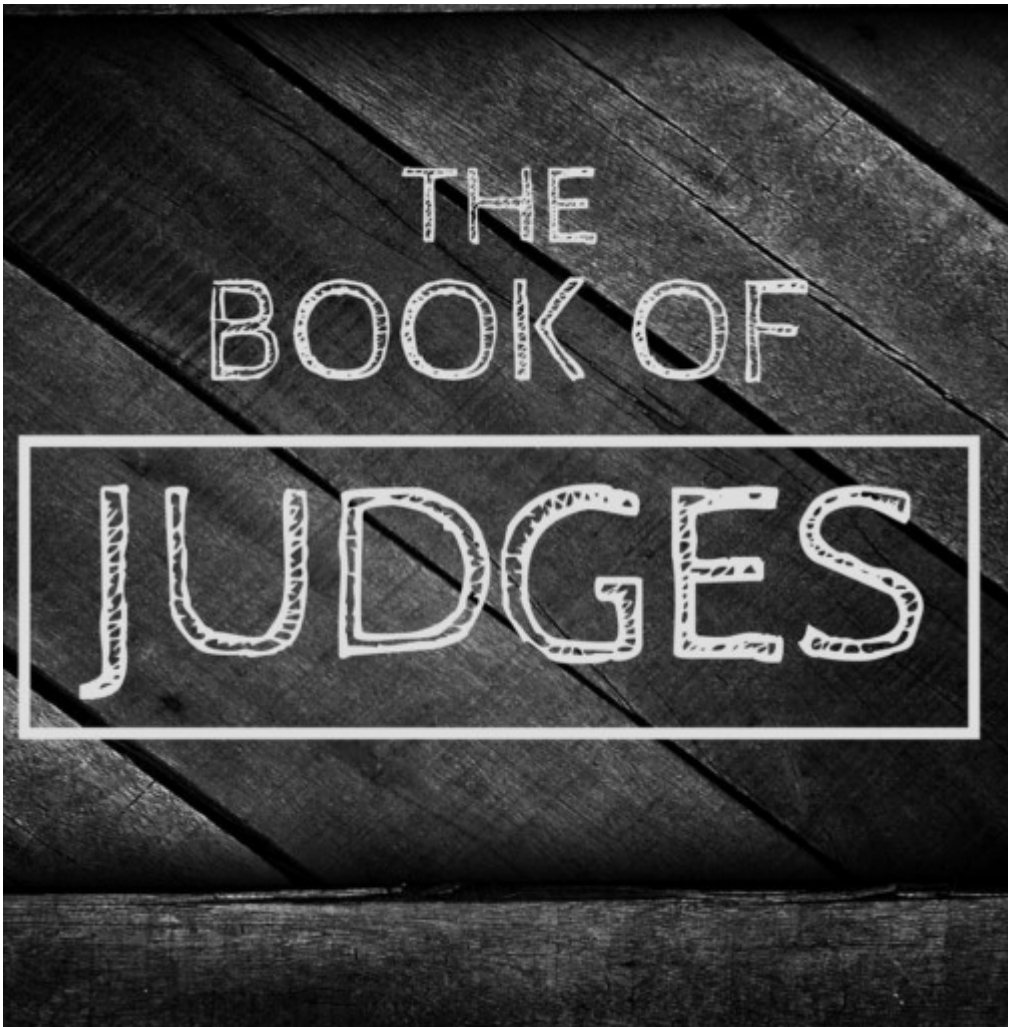


Let's Worship God

9th-14th May 2022
Judges



JUDGES

Monday - Judges 16:1-3 - Physically Strong but Morally Weak

Chapter 16 of Judges begins with a disturbing statement. Samson goes to Gaza, a Philistine city about thirty-five miles south of his hometown, and there he visits a prostitute. Once again, we see that God's standards for marriage are disregarded.

While he is there, the people of Gaza realize that this great enemy of the Philistines is among them. Some of them wait at the gates of the city, intending to ambush him when he tries to leave in the morning. However, Samson takes them by surprise by leaving at midnight. The Philistines do not expect this, as the gates are barred all night. This proves to be no obstacle for Samson, for, in his great strength, he lifts the gates - posts, bars and all - and hoists them on his shoulders. He carries them nearly forty miles to a hill near Hebron. Such a feat is a sign the Spirit of God is still upon Samson, giving him this extraordinary strength.

Samson's moral failings show us that God can and does use flawed human beings for His good purposes. There are at least two lessons in this. First, we learn that just because a man is used mightily by God does not mean he is infallible. People to whom the LORD gives great gifts still sin and make errors of judgment. Servants of God may be good examples for us to follow, but, ultimately, our lives must be guided by God's Word, not by the example of fallible men. Second, we learn that God can and will use us despite our personal weaknesses and flaws. Recognition of our own sins, failings and weaknesses is no excuse for failing to serve the LORD. Instead, such recognition should cause us to flee to Him and to rely on His strength in all that we do in His service.

Questions

1. How do we know the Spirit of God was still upon Samson at this time?
2. How do we see Samson's moral weakness in this passage?
3. What two lessons do we learn from this event?

Prayer Points

1. Praise God that He uses us despite our many flaws.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

"If my head is shaved, then my strength will leave me, and I shall become weak and be like any other man." Judges 16:17b

Praise: Psalm 91 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

JUDGES

Tuesday - Judges 16:4-6 - Samson and Delilah

The next part of the account of Samson's life takes place in the valley of Sorek, a valley that ran from just west of Jerusalem, along the border of the tribal territories of Dan and Judah, down to the Mediterranean Sea. Samson's hometown of Zorah was near this valley and, Timnath, the hometown of his wife, was located in the valley. Now, near the end of his tenure as judge, he returns to the area where his fight against the Philistines began.

We are told Samson loved a woman in the valley of Sorek whose name was Delilah. It may be that Delilah is a nickname, for it means "flirt." This flirtatious woman proves to have a poor character. She will willingly sell out Samson for money.

The lords of the Philistines personally come to her. The term "lords of the Philistines" refers to the kings of the five great Philistine cities. That these men personally come to Delilah, and that they offer each to pay her 1,100 pieces of silver (totaling the enormous sum of 5,500 pieces of silver) shows how greatly they fear Samson's strength. Delilah immediately sets out to wheedle the secret of Samson's strength out of him.

Proverbs 31:30 warns, "Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised." As before, we find in this week's study, that Samson demonstrates poor judgment when it comes to his dealings with women. He is apparently attracted to women for their charm and beauty, but has no regard for whether they fear the LORD. His desire for the wrong women has led to much hardship in his life so far. Now, his failure to curb his desire will lead to his capture and death. May unmarried Christians who desire to marry learn from Samson's mistakes and choose a wife or husband who fears the LORD.

Questions

1. How do we know Delilah had poor character?
2. Why would the lords of the Philistines offer her so much money?
3. What kind of husband or wife should an unmarried Christian who is called to marriage be seeking?

Prayer Points

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

Memory Verse

"If my head is shaved, then my strength will leave me, and I shall become weak and be like any other man." Judges 16:17b

Praise: Psalm 92 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

JUDGES

Wednesday - Judges 16:6-9 - A Test

Samson tells Delilah that his extraordinary strength will leave him if he is bound with seven fresh bowstrings that have not been dried. Bowstrings in Samson's day were often made of sinew or rawhide which was stretched and dried in a process that made it strong enough to withstand repeated use without stretching or breaking. Samson's suggestion that fresh, undried bowstrings, which would still be stretchable, could bind him is absurd. That Delilah and the Philistines believe him is evidence that they superstitiously think there is something magical about Samson's strength. Were the source of Samson's strength magical, he might be rendered weak by some superstitious ritual, such as binding him with seven fresh, undried bowstrings. However, Delilah and the Philistines are unaware that the source of Samson's great strength is the Holy Spirit, Himself. Nothing made by men can possibly bind the power of the Spirit of God.

We see here that Samson is testing Delilah. Will she try to bind him? Indeed she does try. She has men hide in an inner chamber, waiting to capture Samson should his strength leave him. She then binds him with seven fresh bowstrings and shouts, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" Samson snaps the bowstrings as if they were burnt flax. Presumably the men in hiding do not reveal themselves, otherwise Samson would clearly know Delilah has sold him out. As it is, he thinks she has just been testing him. That he continues his relationship with her after this demonstrates his foolishness. He does not believe he can trust her with the truth, and she does not trust his word to her. Neither is being truthful with the other, and neither is trusting the other. If Samson does not intend to marry Delilah, his continued pursuit of her is sinful. If he intends to marry her when it is clear he does not find her trustworthy, he is a fool.

Questions

1. How do we see that Samson does not trust Delilah?
2. How does Delilah test Samson?

Prayer Points

1. Pray for God's guidance in our dealings with others.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

"If my head is shaved, then my strength will leave me, and I shall become weak and be like any other man." Judges 16:17b

Praise: Psalm 93 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

JUDGES

Thursday - Judges 16:10-12 - A Second Test

Having failed to get Samson to reveal the secret of his strength to her, Delilah accuses him of mocking her. She pleads with him to tell her how he might be bound. That Samson continues with this charade tells us at least two things. On the one hand, it tells us that he does not really trust Delilah. If he found her trustworthy, he would be able to tell her his secret without hesitation. On the other hand, it tells us that he does not really know how untrustworthy she is. If he were to realize that she has sold him out to the Philistines, he would not continue with this game of lies, eventually telling her all.

Again, Samson lies to Delilah and again she tests him. This time, he tells her that he can be bound by new ropes that have not been used. If she knew the story of his deeds at Ramath-lehi, she would know this is untrue, for, as we saw in chapter 15, Samson was able to break the two new ropes with which the men of Judah had bound him. Nevertheless, she binds him with new ropes and shouts, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" Whereupon, he breaks the ropes as he prepares to defend himself. Again, the men waiting in the inner chamber must not reveal themselves, otherwise Samson would know that Delilah has betrayed him.

Samson is playing a foolish and dangerous game. If he believes he can trust Delilah, he should tell her the truth - especially if he intends to marry her (or at least he should tell her it is a secret he will save until they are married). If he believes he cannot trust her, he should simply refuse to tell her his secret rather than lie to her. Proverbs 12:22 tells us "Lying lips are an abomination to the LORD." If it is necessary for us to keep a secret, we should not lie, but simply say nothing at all.

Questions

1. Why does Samson lie to Delilah?
2. What should he have done rather than lie to her?
3. Why should we not tell lies?

Prayer Points

1. Ask God to help us to be truthful in all our dealings.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

"If my head is shaved, then my strength will leave me, and I shall become weak and be like any other man." Judges 16:17b

Praise: Psalm 94 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

JUDGES

Friday - Judges 16:13-14 - A Third Test

According to the regulations of the Nazirite found in Numbers 6, and partially repeated in Judges 13, no razor was to come upon Samson's head, and the locks of his hair were to grow long. His long hair now plays a part in the game of lies he is playing with Delilah.

Vexed that Samson has twice now avoided revealing to her the secret of his strength, Delilah again accused him of mocking her and insists that he tell her how his great strength might be overcome. This time, he tells her that his extraordinary strength will leave him if the locks of his hair are weaved into the web of a loom and fastened with a pin. While he sleeps, Delilah weaves his hair into the loom and fastens it tight with a pin. She then wakes him with a shout, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" As before, this method proves useless to bind Samson. Rising from sleep, he pulls the entire loom along as he prepares to defend himself.

Despite all his flaws and failings, the Spirit of the Lord, who is the true Source of Samson's strength, is still with him. How gracious it is that God continues to give Samson this superhuman strength, even when he has violated his Nazirite vow (as we saw in chapter 14), dishonored marriage, and lied. Tomorrow, we will see that God removes that strength from Samson for a time. Similarly, if we persist in sin when we are in Christ, the Lord may discipline us by removing some of the benefits of His presence from us. However, we know that the Holy Spirit never leaves those who trust in Jesus Christ, for, as Ephesians 1:13-14 tells us, He is the guarantee of our inheritance in Christ.

Questions

1. How does Delilah test Samson for the third time?
2. How do we know the Spirit of the Lord is still with Samson?
3. How is this evidence of God's grace?

Prayer Points

1. Thank God that all who have faith in Christ are sealed with the Holy Spirit.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

"If my head is shaved, then my strength will leave me, and I shall become weak and be like any other man." Judges 16:17b

Praise: Psalm 95 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

JUDGES

Saturday - Judges 16:15-22 - Betrayal

Samson has now lied to Delilah three times concerning the source of his great strength. She accuses him of not really loving her, otherwise he would not mock her. These three tests likely happened in rapid succession, and all the while the men who were supposed to capture Samson were lying in wait in the inner chamber of Delilah's house. Now, however, it seems they have gone away. For days and days, Delilah pressures Samson to reveal his secret to her. Finally, he breaks down and tells her that if his head is shaved, he will lose his strength. When she feels certain Samson has told her the truth, she sends to the lords of the Philistines, who come to oversee Samson's capture and bring the money to pay Delilah for her betrayal.

As Samson sleeps with his head in her lap, she shaves his head and then says, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" When he rises to defend himself, his great strength is gone, for the Lord has left him. The Philistines capture him, gouge out his eyes, and take him to Gaza where they make him work at hard labor in prison.

There was no special power in Samson's hair. However, his hair was the last unbroken sign of his Nazirite vow left to him. Samson has disregarded his Nazirite vow in every other way, and now has allowed Delilah to take away this last sign of that vow. For this, God disciplines him, taking away his strength for a time. His strength came from the Lord, and his life as a Nazirite was a sign of that relationship. That he would reveal this to Delilah shows that she was more important to him than God, and, thus, the Lord ceased to give Samson his extraordinary gift as a means to chastise him. May we remember to value our relationship with the Lord above all other relationships.

Questions

1. Why does Samson tell Delilah his strength will leave him if his head is shaved?
2. Why did the LORD remove Samson's strength?

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

"If my head is shaved, then my strength will leave me, and I shall become weak and be like any other man." Judges 16:17b

Praise: Psalm 96 - 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!**

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