

Furthermore, it is the angel of the Lord who gives the command for the filthy rags to be taken off Joshua in Zechariah 3, and for him to be clothed in fine garments. The immediate context indicates that this is intended to symbolise the restoration of the priesthood of Israel. The text also symbolises, however, Christ clothing us with the garments of righteousness (Isaiah 61:10).

The angel of the Lord represents a christophany — a **pre-incarnation appearance of Jesus Christ**. It also adds yet another example to the powerful and compelling cumulative case from the Bible's remarkable internal coherence and interconnectedness — a phenomenon which can surely only be explained by the Bible's divine origin.

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Vs 8-12: Samson's birth announced: Manoah asked for a second visitation in order to confirm the first one. The Angel returns and confirms, then asks them **to obey God's Will...** he emphasises the responsibility of the mother to protect the new life that will be given.... the mother's behaviour in pregnancy will affect the future child.... Yet we are told nothing about this pregnancy.....

NB: Look at the humility of the Lord in conceding this grace - how He bows to our needs...

Vs 15-18: The sacrifice: when Manoah offered food to the Angel – thinking that he was human - he was told to offer sacrifice to the Lord instead..... thereby identifying the person in whose Presence, they stood.

It was to be a burnt offering so that the meat was given entirely to God and the worship was for God alone.

The Angel refused to give His Name – which was God's way of communicating – He only gave His Name to Moses **I am who I am: Ex 3:14**

Vs. 18: **Why do you ask my name, SEEING IT IS WONDERFUL?** Cf **Is 9:6, 28:29; Esther 9:14; Ps 40:5, 107:8, 15,21, 111:4**

Vs 19-23: A wonderful sign: as the burnt offering ascended to Heaven, so the angel ascended **in the flame**, indicating who he was, so Manoah and his wife fell on their faces before the presence of God!

Manoah was terrified saying **we will surely die, for we have seen God!**

Cf Ex 33:20: You cannot see my face; for no man shall see me and live

His wife calms him: (i) He wouldn't have told you these things if he wanted to kill us.

(ii) He wouldn't have accepted the sacrifice if we had done something wrong.

MANOAH AND THE ANGEL OF GOD



“The Angel of the Lord shall encamp around those who fear him ...” Psalm 34:7

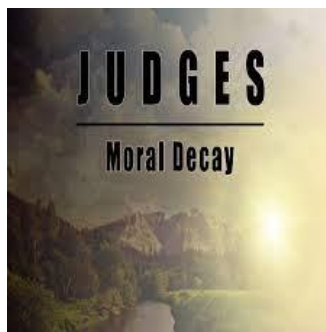
Vs 24-25: Promise fulfilled: Samson was born and the Lord blessed him **and the Spirit of God began to move upon him....** he started so well... how could anything go wrong?

NB: It is the Spirit of God which makes us strong – it is **inner strength** not physical strength that makes the difference.

That inner strength comes from a soul surrendered to God with God's order in their lives... with Wisdom and Understanding guiding their lives, and Love guiding all their relationships.

Physical strength combined with selfish passions, stubbornness, pride, and a refusal to face one's problems spells **disaster**.

Chapter 14: Wrong relationships



We are told nothing about Samson's childhood. In chap 14 we meet him as an adult wanting marriage, but he must not align himself with the enemy he was supposed to conquer!

Vs 1-3: Samson chooses a Philistine wife!

- 1) Samson liked the woman and took nothing else into consideration. This was self-will, not God's Will. It was what he wanted – not what God wanted. He seems to have the rebellion of Ishmael, Abraham's son... and of Esau, Jacob's son, both of whom married outside of the Chosen People and eventually drifted away altogether.
- 2) Samson showed disregard both for his parents - who wanted him to marry within the Chosen people as God had expressly told them to do since the time of Abraham– not those whom he was supposed to conquer. He also rejected God's Will in his life since he was chosen from birth! You don't marry the enemy! That aligns you to the wrong kingdom, and gives evil a porthole to torment you.
- 3) Cf Deut 7:3-4. God's People were a people set apart for Him and His Kingdom.
- 4) It is the same in the NT: 2 Cor 6:14 says that Christians must not yoke themselves to unbelievers..... but nowadays they do, but then they must take the consequences!
- 5) 1 Pet 2:9 tells us why we must be a people apart from the world: **You are a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's very own possession. You are called to sing the praises of God who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light...**
- 6) If we do marry outside the fold we must remain faithful to our vows, paying the price for our decision: 1 Cor 7: 10-16. We must try to understand 2 Timothy 2: 20-22: God sometimes chooses people for special purposes and that vessel must remain somehow worthy of their call!

Vs 4 claims that in Samson's case the Lord was somehow behind this disobedience!!

In other words, God had to work with Samson's rebellious will. He was certainly going to have to use Samson in strange circumstances!

Samson was called to be a **Judge** but he never called an army! In fact, he acted alone. He was a real loner. He sought no one's advice, not even that of his parents – who were the ones who had met with the Angel of the Lord! He did not seem to consult the Lord either. He was so sure of himself, yet he made many mistakes, and we can learn from these mistakes.

Cf 2 Tim 3:16-17: **all scripture is given by inspiration by God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that a man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.** In other words we can learn from both the positive and negative lessons in order to grow safely ourselves.

God did use this ungodly marriage to get the process of unseating the Philistines going.... but in a very unusual way, and it will come at great personal cost to Samson. It is not meant for imitation!

Vs 5-6: Samson discovers his strength



- 1) S was a lifelong Nazarite, so he could have nothing to do with the fruit of the vine, so what was he doing in the vineyards of Timnah in the land of the Philistines (Judges 13:4-5; Num 6: 3-4)? Is he not dangerously close to serious compromise? To the occasions of sin?
- 2) He was surprised by a lion who came roaring against him..... Of course, he was not aware of the spiritual significance of this, and so he learned nothing from it! Dealing physically with the lion was nothing compared to dealing spiritually with evil.
- 3) Cf 1 Pet 5:8: **Be sober and vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in faith.....** that roaring lion wants to destroy **all of** God's chosen ones.
- 4) In this first contest of his strength the Holy Spirit came upon him and S tore the lion apart easily. God will help us also to overcome the attacks of the devil, but we must be in obedience to His Divine Will – not flouting it, and thus tempting God!
- 5) Cf Deut 6:16; Mt 4:7.
- 6) Hopefully God will never find us among 'the vineyards of the Philistines' – the enemies of the Kingdom of God! But if we are in the Divine Will then we have a wonderful help: Rom 8: 28-39 **If God is for us who can be against us?** We have the Lion of the Tribe of Juda as our Saviour, and he conquers all our enemies for us.
- 7) Cf 1 Jn 4:4 **Greater is He that is in me than he that is in the world.**

Vs 7-9: The Philistine woman: This is the first of two lethal relationships with the enemy. Whether these women liked Samson or not, they had to be obedient to the men who ruled their territory, so they were dangerous liaisons for Samson.

Cf Prov 4:23: **Above all else, keep watch over your heart, since here are the wellsprings of life. Jesus told His followers to leave all to follow Him:** Mk 10:29-30; Lk 18:24-34

On his way to get the woman, S came across the carcass of the lion, but touching a dead carcass broke his Nazarite vow!! Num 6:6-7

He did this after he had experienced the infilling of the Holy Spirit, so he does not reflect on anything. He simply does what he thinks in the moment.... But we need to engage 'head' before any actions to make sure that we are within the Will of God!

Samson had consecration without communion! The disastrous consequences of this will soon become apparent.

Samson found honey on the carcass of the lion. He ate some himself and then shared the honey with his parents without telling them **the source** of the sweetness! (Like Eve with Adam!)

Vs 10-11: The bachelor drinking feast: His Nazarite vow did not permit S to be part of drinking bouts – which bachelor parties were! The 30 extra guests indicate this!



Vs 12-14: The Riddle: Samson now has a problem. It was the custom in those days that the guests would be given a new set of clothes for the wedding – supplied by the Groom or his parents. Samson tries to solve this with a riddle which he knows they will not solve – so he provokes them to anger.... **“Out of the eater came something to eat, and out of the strong came something sweet”.**

Vs 15-18: Nagging wife: The men put pressure on the woman to get the solution to the riddle and so she nags S for 7 days until he can't hold out any more, so he tells her the answer.

If Samson had learned his lesson on this marriage, Delilah would not be able to cause his death later, but he did not learn!

Life (God) allows us to have a repeat lesson to see would we learn from it and go on with maturity.... but some don't learn from experience and are doomed to fail each time - like Samson, and they remain immature children.

The danger of marrying into the enemy is now seen: she is not on the side of her husband but on the side of her people, so she betrays him... the men threatened her that they would burn her father's house if she did not comply with them.

Samson realises what has happened: **if you had not ploughed with my heifer, you would not have solved the riddle!**

Vs 19-20: Revenge: Samson's wife manipulated him to reveal the riddle but she lost her husband's heart and her marriage as a result... Samson walked off and she was promptly given to his best man!

Then Samson went down to ASHKELON and killed 30 men, took their garments and gave them to the guests who spoke his riddle!

This was an occasion for him to move against the Philistines (Judges 14:4); this was a strange way to pay his debt! Did he have no problem with violence?

Samson himself was a riddle very difficult to explain!

Chapter 15: Samson against the Philistines

Vs 1-3: Retaliation

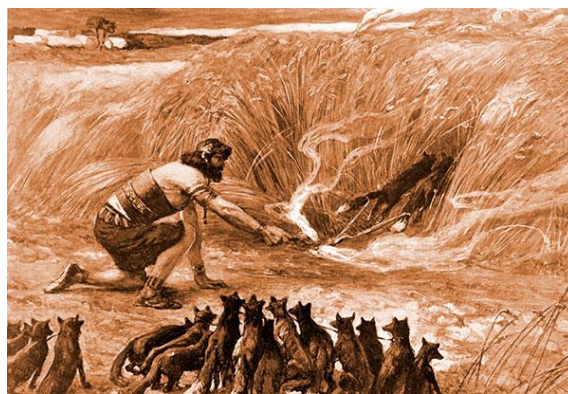
Samson went to visit his wife – only to discover that she has been given to another man!

His anger was terrible, and the outcome will be terrible also.

Prov 4:23 warns us **Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life.** In other words, guard your heart and its deep feelings and passions, or you will have trouble!

Phil 4:7: **The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.** Samson knew nothing about this peace of living in union with God's Will.

Vs 4-5: Samson burns the crops of the Philistines



Can we make sense of this story? Samson went crazy with anger when he realised what they had done to his wife. He went into their fields with the crops almost ready for harvesting..... he captured 300 foxes – which was no mean feat! He took torches and placed one between two tails of foxes tied together.... when he set fire to the torches the foxes ran in all directions to escape the flames, setting the crops on fire as they did so.... thus, they destroyed the harvest

This was a truly imaginative way to destroy the enemy – using foxes in this manner!

Spiritually the Lord tries to “capture us” with His Saving Love. He wants to set us on fire with Divine Love and to send us out 2X2 into the world to deal with the evil that is destroying the nations.

The crops of the true Enemy are: Prostitution, sex-trafficking and sex-slavery, every type of addiction that robs us of our souls, deception, murder and euthanasia etc

I Jn 3:8: The Son of God appeared for this purpose to destroy the works of the devil

We who are on fire with God’s Love must run in every direction bringing the light and truth of the Gospel to everyone: so, let the Lord TRULY catch you; let Him set you on fire with Divine Love and let Him send YOU to everyone as he wishes.

Remember Mt 3:10-12: God’s fire cleanses, purifies, sanctifies and then glorifies. It does this for us first and then for others through us.



Vs 6-7: Philistines retaliate by burning Samson’s wife and her father to death!!

Much of the war, strife, deep-seated hatred, pain and brokenness of the world comes from the desire to get even. It’s the ‘you hit me, I hit you’ principle which is widespread.

Vs 8: So, Samson attacked them “hip and thigh”. This means a cruel and unsparing slaughter.... he was a one-man army against the Philistines!

But the result was that Samson could now trust no one; he became a fugitive hiding in the cleft of a rock at ETAM.

Vs 9-17: Samson kills 1,000 Philistines with jawbone of donkey

The leaders came to Judah to arrest Samson. This shows that his own people were not truly with him, nor would they understand his way of doing things.

The fact that his own people handed him over to his enemies illustrates just how awful their oppression was under those Philistines, and also how low the morale was among them. They were not expecting any deliverance from Samson, so they did not rally around him.

They would rather please their oppressors than support their deliverer. This is the fate of anyone who stands up in public to confront evil....

They are alone with no one to support them. Both Jesus and Paul experienced this in the NT; saints and martyrs have experienced it ever since Cf 2 Tim 4:16.

Samson allowed himself to be bound trusting in God to deliver him from his enemies



When the Philistine leaders arrived at LEHI The Spirit of God came upon Samson again...he broke the ropes that bound him, grabbed the jawbone of an ass and slaughtered the Philistines.

Samson's victory cry was: **with the jawbone of an ass heaps upon heaps. I have slain 1,000**