

Judges 13:1-7; 16:18-31; The Lusting Judge I. Samson's Women II. Samson's Vow III. Samson's Sacrifice

Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, how many leaders today have been plagued by public sins? How many lives wrecked by some grievous immorality? Most of us know pastors or other public official whose ability to govern has been undone after a fall into sin. So many examples of people losing so much- but how does this happen? How do leaders get to this point in their lives that they no longer restrain their hands? Well, human nature is easily deceived. We are easily led astray by various passions and pleasures. Temptation comes subtilty at first, but later the pull comes with greater intensity. As Cain found out, if you do not resist the devil's temptations, this sin will gain mastery over your heart. We can all be desensitised by sin. If any man think he stands, beware lest he fall. Well, in our series through Judges we have come to the last judge- Samson. Again we find Israel in crisis- in fact they have grown accustomed to sin so that choose the status quo instead of God's chosen judge. Samson, don't you know that Philistines are rulers over us -the men of Judah say in ch. 15? And even God's judge, Samson- is a lusty man, led by his eyes into all sorts of sin. In pride, thinking his own strength can get him out of any jam. Into this context we find that the Jesus Christ uses a lusty judge to begin to save His people from slavery.

I. Samson's Women

We start then by considering Samson's women. The first woman in our narrative is actually Samson's mom, called the wife of Manoah. She is barren and childless- like Sarah before her- but it was to her that the angel of the LORD appeared with a promise. You will have a son, and he will be a Nazarite. I will begin to save Israel from the hand of the Philistines- 13:5. But as we read the life of Samson, it seems like Samson is more interested in hooking up with the Philistines than actually saving Israel from their hand. The first woman Samson has a crush on I found in 14:1- the daughter of a Philistine born in Timnah. What attracts Samson is this- she was seen- and she is right in his eyes- 14:3. Note this- Samson chooses a woman because of her appearance- and has no hesitation at marrying a Philistine. Israel was not supposed to become wed to a pagan- and Samson is supposed to be an example to others? We find that throughout his life, Samson is led by his eyes. His weakness is his flesh- His wanton lust leads him into sin. You see, Samson is just like his

fellow Israelites. Each doing what is right in their own eyes. Even though Samson's parents plead with him- don't do this! It is forbidden. Samson will not listen. And we as the reader are given a behind the scenes look in 14:4- God is going to use Samson's lusty eyes to bring the situation to a head. A conflict is brewing, and the LORD is going to use Samson's choice in woman to bring about a partial deliverance! With each woman- and there are three- we find the end result is that the Philistines suffer loss! So Samson sees what he likes, and goes to get it. But because of Samson's anger, this daughter of Timnah is given to another and she is eventually killed in 15:6. This leads to 3 conflicts- Samson kills 30 men, catches 300 foxes and uses them to set the Philistine's land on fire, and Samson destroys them with a great blow in 15:8. The next woman is a prostitute of Gaza introduced in 16:1. Like Jephthah's mother, Samson goes in to a sex trade worker. The men of Gaza think- now we have Samson trapped. But no, Samson just rips up the city gate and bar- hoists them on his shoulder- and carries them off to a hill 40 miles away. The city is left defenseless and Samson has the last laugh. Finally we are introduced to Delilah in 16:4. Samson loves this woman from the Valley of Sorek. Now Sorek means choice wine- which indicates the state of Samson at this point. He is living with a woman who will be employed by the Philistines- in the valley of wine. We will hear more about this in our next point. Delilah- like Samson's dead wife- will serve to be his undoing. Samson can't keep secrets from his women- and Delilah will both seduce and torment him. As we know, it will be by way of Samson's pride that he eventually gives up his secret- securing his destruction. These are the kind of women that Samson chose associate with. Remember back to our introduction to Judges in 3:6- Israel was taking the daughters of the lands to be their wives. This serves as application today- be careful who you date- who you associate with and above all who you marry! A mixed marriage- as I Cor. 7 calls it- only leads to suffering. Now Samson knew better- his parents warned him repeatedly- in 14:3. Samson had been taught- but he ignores his parents and follows his fleshly desire! Going along with society. But remember, choosing to marry an unbeliever often undermines one's ability to serve! If you do not share a united faith in Christ, what often happens is that your service is hindered and your sanctification undermined! But even to married I say this- flee sexual immorality! Whoever is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. Sexual sins are sin

against the body but also sin against the Lord to whom you are united- I Cor. 6 says! Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit- you were bought with a price! Sexual iniquity must be put to death- pornography, sex outside of marriage- and even dating an unbeliever- is to follow lusty eyes instead of submitting to the Lord of your body and soul! Sin has consequences- rebellion against the Lord brings only pain! But sexual sins are not the only rebellion seen in Samson's life.

II. Samson's Vow

Next we look at Samson's vow- or more specifically the Nazarite vow placed upon him. Before his birth, his parents were told. This child is to be a Nazarite- according to Numbers 6- a Nazarite would be identified by 3 things. A summary is found in 13:4-5. He must not drink wine or strong drink, he must not eat anything unclean or touch anything dead, and no razor shall be used to cut his hair. What is unique about this vow is that normally a Nazarite vow would be temporary- for a set time; and this vow would be voluntary- a person would freely choose to make it. However, for Samson this vow would be lifestyle. It was not a choice and it was life-long. For Samson, this vow was part of his office as partial savior- one who would begin the work of delivering Israel from the hand of the Philistines. However, Samson did not think too highly of his office. Not only does he despise his parent's instruction, he sold his birthright as well. Remember that Samson was a covenant child, but he chooses to give up his identity. Not only does he run around with Philistine women, he also breaks every aspect of his vow. Concerning unclean food and touching dead things, remember that back in 14:8 he picks up a donkey's jawbone. And again in 15:15, he reaches his hand into the carcass of a lion in order to scoop up some honey comb. Next, concerning his abstinence from wine- in 14:10 he is seen throwing a wedding feast. A particular kind of feast that included drinking wine. And as we saw, he was living with Delilah in the valley of wine. And finally his hair. We all know the story of how Samson let Delilah know the secret of his strength- in 16:19 the seven locks of hair were trimmed off by a razor and the Spirit of the LORD departed him. Remember that Samson personifies Israel as a nation. She was supposed to be holy nation- a royal priesthood- holy to the LORD and faithful in obedience. However, like Israel, Samson sells his

birthright! He rebels against His calling and the Spirit of the LORD was offended- grieved! A covenant child rebelling against God and forsaking the signs of the covenant! Taking his calling for granted, and considering his duty to be of little regard. Like the prodigal son, Samson wanted to live and act just like the nations- so that is what God gives him. Go and serve their gods- be fed with their food- feel the pinch of your blindness and the weight of your bondage! In this, God is calling His child back! God has not forsaken his son- His child Israel will be called back! Now Samson literally feels the pain. His lusty eyes are plucked out- He is forced into bondage and chained with shackles- 16:21. He is made to grind grain like an animal. That is who Israel is- that is who we are in our sins! Blind and in chains- and now Samson is forced to acknowledge the truth! I cannot save by my own strength- I am unable to do anything but the strength of the LORD'S Spirit. I have sinned, I need your strength! But there is still hope- as his hair begins to grow back. The Spirit was grieved but Samson was not utterly forsaken. There is hope for the straying sons of Israel! They can yet remember and believe- there is time still for them to cry out to God in prayer! God can still use them! As II Chron. 7 puts it, if my people humble themselves, seek my face and turn from their sins, I will hear and I will forgive!

III. Samson's Sacrifice

And finally, we come to Samson's sacrifice. Samson did not have an easy life. Like Jephthah before, Samson's own people did not embrace him. Back in 15:11, the tribe of Judah chose their Philistine oppressors over Samson's freedom. And all the women that he loved were killed, turned on him and even handed him over for money. But God was stirring the pot- and bringing things to a point of conflict. A few thousand Philistine oppressors were killed and Samson judged over Israel for 20 years. We also learn from Samson's life that God hears and answers prayers. Sometimes in immediate and dramatic ways, the ears of the LORD are attentive to those who cry out to Him! From His miraculous birth and holy calling- down to His boasting pride and forced humiliation- God is avenging Himself on His enemies. Through His life we see, God is able to hit the target with the most crooked arrow! Samson was a man of faith- and although that faith was weak and inconsistent- he still cried out the LORD and ended his life trusting in His Name! God is

working for the sake of His people- He will keep His promise and He will not allow His people to be wiped out. Israel must remain- there must be a remnant! God is going to make a fool of the foe- overturning the plans of the wicked on their heads. Ultimately, at the end of Samson's life- unable to see and bound with chains- He is also to see his own need. It was his eyes that got him into trouble- but now without sight he learns to live by faith. His pride got him into this mess- now in humility he is the most useful to the LORD. Samson's sacrifice made in 16:30 proves he is an instrument of the justice of God! The LORD is using Him to destroy the enemy of God's people! Samson will sacrifice himself to save his own people and to destroy the foe. Just as he once killed the lion with his bare hands, now he destroys the temple of the false god Dagon and buries with him some 3000 idolaters. For God's enemies, this point which looked like a great victory was turned into their greatest defeat! When they boasted over the Lord's anointed, they were humbled and brought into the dust. We find the same thing at the end of Jesus' life, don't we! The devil thought that he has won, the Son of Man was put to death. But what the devil did not know was that it was through Christ's death that the devil's defeat was secured! When God's Savior appears to be beaten- it is then that God is most mightily saving! In the death of the Savior, the armies of darkness are buried as well. But what Samson only did in part, Jesus would do to the full. Although David ends up being the one who fully saves Israel from the Philistine oppressors- crushing Goliath's head as well- It is only the true Son of David that will fully and completely save His people from every foe- and rise again on the 3rd day for our justification!

To conclude, we have finally arrived at the last major judge. What can we say- except that God is patient- and it is for that reason that Israel and we are not consumed! He is mighty to save- and often delivers us in a surprising manner! Another commentator put it this way- Samson was a He-man with She-trouble! Today, we have seen that this lusty judge finally sees the truth! Will he fight the Philistines, or go to bed with them? He is a sinner- and God saves us by His grace! As the thief on the cross prayed- please remember me! God uses the death of His anointed one to bring about a great victory for the sake of His people! Praise God for the Christ who was righteous and has fully saved!